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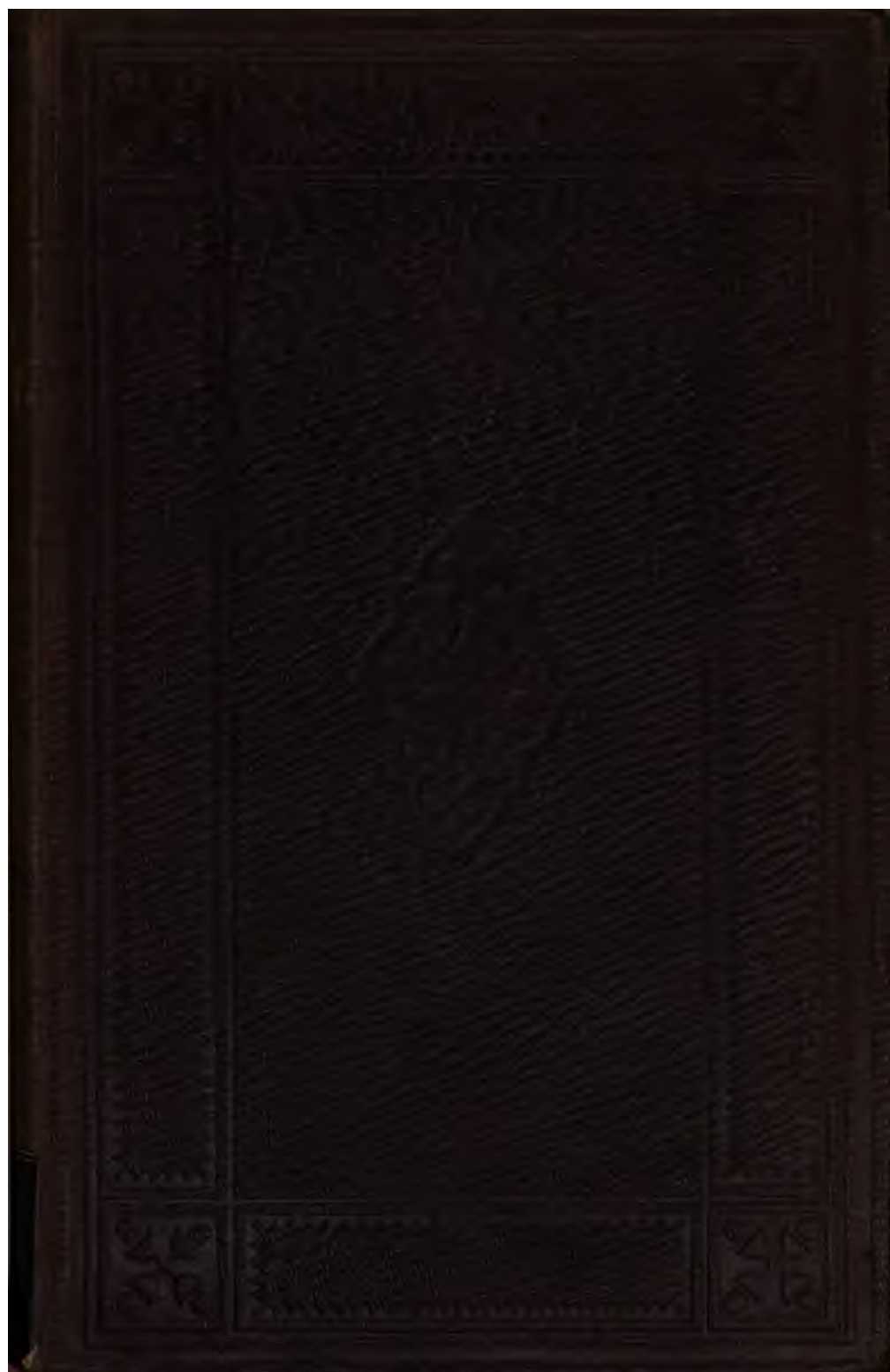
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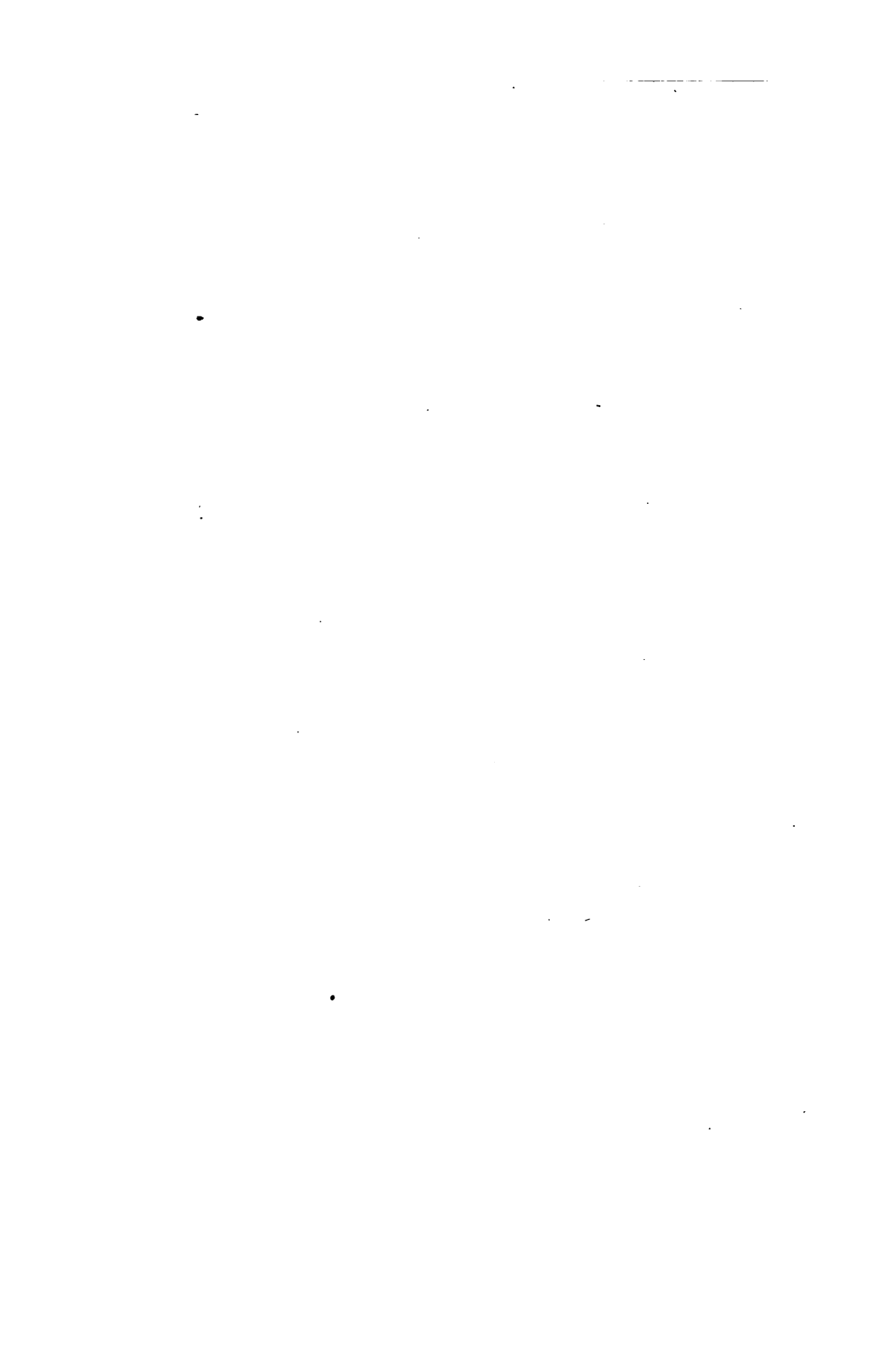
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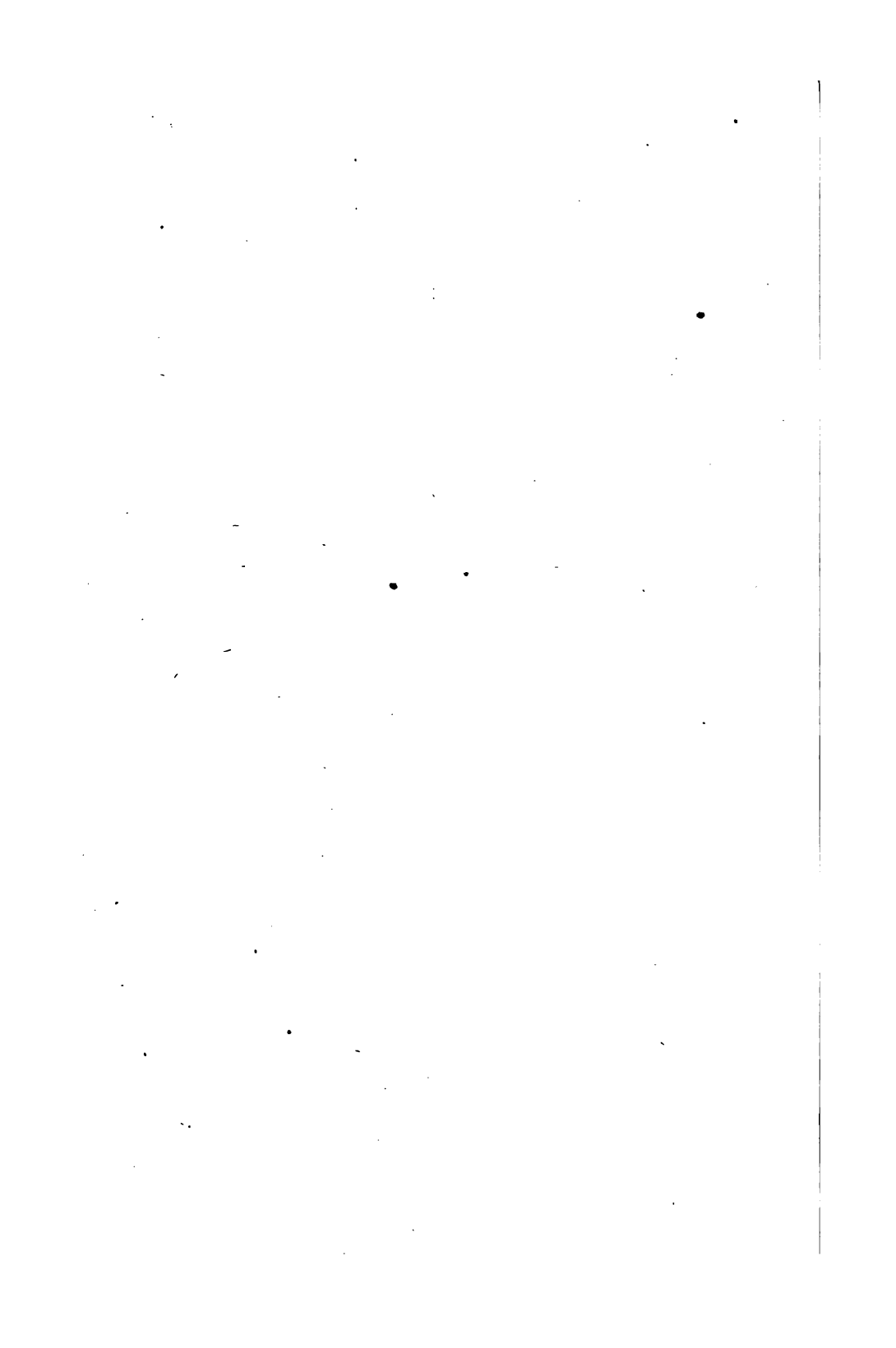




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THE HOME AND THE PRIEST.

AN ITALIAN TALE.

BY GIROLAMO VOLPE,

AUTHOR OF

"MEMOIRS OF AN EX-CAPUCHIN; OR, SCENES OF
MONASTIC LIFE IN ITALY." "LA TRADITA DEGLI AMIDEI,"
&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

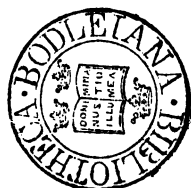
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THE HOME AND THE PRIEST.

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINING IMPORTANT MATTERS FOR THE
SERIOUS READER.

THE month of January, in the year 1847, drew to a close. With the advent of the new year Italy looked for great changes and extraordinary events. She believed that the time of her revival had arrived, and that ages of suffering, humiliation, and wretchedness,—of oppression on the part of tyrants, and slavery on the part of the people, were about to result in the regeneration of the entire peninsula. Liberty seemed to have dawned for the sons of that lovely land

which had owned so many martyrs and undergone on different occasions, in our own times, such terrible struggles against the oppressors. The doctrines of priestly Utopians were eagerly listened to, and in an especial manner the principles of one great philosopher, Gioberti, obtained support, because he was liberal although a priest. Thus Italy believed, according to his doctrines, that her regeneration was to come through the means of her pontiff. Nor was this the belief alone of those attached to the doctrines of Rome. Men possessed of the most vigorous intellect and solid powers of thought were equally enthusiastic—and no wonder, when it was also the belief of other nations. A Pope had excited little less than a mania of adoration throughout the world, and despots trembled before a liberal one, as in earlier ages kings and emperors trembled at excommunication. The accession of Pius IX. to the pontifical throne worked this wonder, this revolution, in the minds and opinions of the world. A Pope, it seemed, was to banish prejudice from Italy, overcome the system of corruption, reclaim the bad, excite just convictions, diffuse lofty sentiments, raise men's

minds out of the abject state inseparable from servitude, tame the ferocious, humanize the violent, and inculcate patriotism and integrity in adventurous audacious outlaws, and murderers.

A Pope it was who was expected, by his influence and example, to renew the codes of laws in many states of Italy, so imperfect, oppressive, contradictory, and insidious ; reform the rapacity and abuses of magistrates, lawyers and administrators ; extirpate the race of spies, exalt minds to a dignity worthy of rational beings, disgust men with servitude—even this was no easy undertaking—and educate them to liberty.

A Pope, by his example and authority, was to overthrow privileges, posts, undue exactions, and frauds, and all capricious and arbitrary pretensions on the part of the hierarchy and magistrature and their dependants and hangers-on ; remove all dangerous influence from a monastic family, the Jesuits ; exalt true virtue and knowledge, and render them subservient to his righteous reforms, he himself being the guardian and defender of the sacred rights of the people, and the energetic opponent of undue licence.

Such was the work which it was believed was undergoing the process of maturation in the mind of the Pontiff, for his miserable States, for Italy, groaning beneath the yoke of domestic princes and foreign despots. It was an arduous work, requiring time to bring it to perfection. Difficulties and delays were looked for as a matter of course, but the work once well set going, men regarded success as certain.

Thanks to a Pontiff, Italy revived to new hopes, and believed in the fulfilment of her flattering dreams of nationality and unity. She had already made some progress. Hatred—that ancient pest, was forgotten. Countries hitherto at enmity, or at least estranged from each other, now held forth the hand of friendship, their habitual repulsion ceasing. The people shook off their disgraceful lethargy, hopeful of a gay future, and conscious of rights that demanded freedom from foreign bondage and domestic servitude. Pure-minded Italians conceived the highest aspirations. The nation yielded implicit credence to the coming of better times so hopefully preached by the learned—in which an Italian confederacy should be effected,

on constitutional bases, with the due regard of present rulers, and under the presidency of Rome. These were the hopes nourished by Italy at the commencement of the reign of Pius IX.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH IS DESCRIBED A WONDER—TWO MEN
ON ONE PAIR OF LEGS, AND IN ONE SKIN.

It was the Carnival of 1847. Francesco was in his apartments in company of a person most congenial to him, although he was a priest. It was the priest of Rivalta, who had come to Venice for a few days' diversion. The two were engaged in close conference on a subject of no less importance than the accession of the new Pope, Pius IX., who had begun his reign by an amnesty and numerous salutary reforms. Don Domenico remarked,—

“We may now expect better times. Italy seems on the eve of a total reformation, and we may look soon to see her free. There is the more reason for hope, because it is the Pope who

takes the initiative in rescuing the country from slavery."

"That is the very reason why I cannot hope for any benefit to Italy," answered Francesco, seriously.

"Why are you so obstinately fixed in your opinion?" asked the priest warmly. "You differ from every one else."

"I think so," returned Francesco, "because he is Pope."

"But if he is Pope, he is quite different from his predecessors, and we may look for great good from him. Those who knew him before, declare him to be affable, kind, humane, and of liberal principles. He always professed to deplore the miserable condition of the Roman State, and the church in general. His life has ever been blameless. Wherever he has resided, he has always been beloved and respected by all. The miraculous manner of his election shows plainly that the hand of Providence guided the choice. Was he not created Pope after only a few days' delay, so that the adverse Powers had no opportunity of intimating their *veto*? Was he not elected to the utter disarrangement of

the Austrian plans? Did he not immediately grant an amnesty, and has he not already commenced salutary reforms? Why then should he not go on as he has begun?"

"He will not go on so, simply because he is a sincere man in his belief," answered Francesco, while Don Domenico expressed by a gesture his surprise and discontent. "Yes, because he is sincere, and acts with perfect sincerity. He can never go forward as Pope."

"But his conduct up to this time is far from bearing out your assertions," answered Don Domenico; "he has reformed abuses and remodelled institutions, both political and religious. His government has hitherto been humane, pious, and fatherly."

"Yes, hitherto. Time is required for the perversion of an honest man. But the time will come, not from innate wickedness on his part, but from illusion and superstition. Surround him by designing men, Jesuits, and black robes, and you will see the result."

"But he will never be so surrounded."

"Oh, yes, he will," exclaimed Francesco, energetically. "Now that he is Pope, he likes

to be Pope, and will desire to remain Pope. Were he to resist such influence, in a few months he would cease to be Pope. He would either be secretly disposed of, or induced to abdicate. But neither the one nor the other will take place. He will become a *good* Pope, like the rest."

"But it cannot be said," obstinately insisted Don Domenico, "that the natural disposition of the generality of the Popes has been as good as that of Pius IX."

"What authority have you for saying so? May not the others have equalled and even surpassed him in private life?—And is it not possible that the tiara has spoiled them? It is my opinion that many of the Popes have been cruel, atrocious, and sanguinary men, not from natural inclination, but as a consequence of their position. I believe their inclinations were quite otherwise, but that the purple, of necessity, has obscured their minds, so as to make them really believe themselves good, gentle, pious, and holy, while they were committing acts of cruelty and atrocity."

"Oh, I cannot agree with you; a man of

kind disposition can never be otherwise than kind, whether he be Pope or worse than Pope," answered Don Domenico, with a tone of half-playful, half-real annoyance at being contradicted.

"Well," said his opponent, "what is your opinion of Gregory the Sixteenth?"

"Gregory the Sixteenth," answered he, "was a sanguinary man, a man of inhuman disposition, a man who delighted in the groans of his martyred victims, a true tyrant, whose cruelties were only restricted by the boundaries of the country in which he could indulge his thirst of blood. He was a man who conferred benedictions, in God's name, upon assassins and outlaws, because they were executioners who repressed the magnanimous efforts of patriots. He was the tender father of the Don MIGUELS, whose refined cruelties were perfectly fabulous; worthy son of such a father! He was——"

"Stop! stop!" interrupted Francesco, smiling, "you get on too fast. You would make poor Gregory worse than an Alexander Borgia."

"He was worse," cried the priest, warmly, "because if Alexander the Sixth was corrupt of

heart, he did not attempt to hide it; his life was one of open sin and incredulity. At least, he was not a hypocrite. But Gregory pretended to be moral, religious, and holy, and was a true hypocrite."

"What would you say, dear Don Domenico," asked Francesco, with a tinge of friendly irony, "if I were to tell you that Gregory the Sixteenth was not the cruel man you describe, but showed, in many instances, gentleness and fine feelings?"

"I should say," answered the good man, "that you were jesting, or that you were insane."

"Neither the one nor the other," said Francesco; "yet I fearlessly make the affirmation."

"How can you maintain such an absurdity?" asked the Priest of Rivalta.

"I contend that Gregory, as a man, was beloved and respected, and his sentiments were at least as amiable as those of a friar can be, but as Pope his position and his natural temperament were in contradiction. As a monk he might maintain himself honest, but as Pope it was impossible. A Pope may seem to himself to remain virtuous,

but the actions of a Pope are always bad and pernicious in their effects. Such is the Vicar of Christ on earth according to the title he bestows on himself; and were he not such, he could never be Pope."

"I do not understand you," answered his pertinacious opponent. "How can you say that Gregory was a good man previously to his accession, and not badly disposed? No one knows anything about him before, and his subsequent actions are far from demonstrating your position."

"I do not speak of him before, for his life was obscure; but I speak of him as Pope, and we have good grounds for judging him as I have spoken of him."

"But how can this be, if his infamous actions prove him to be the contrary?"

"His actions as Pope do, I grant, but not his actions as a man, even whilst he was Pope. He, as a man, felt love for his native country, and experienced the sentiments of friendship and benevolence. It was only as Vicar of Christ and as infallible in that character, that his reign was stained with blood, and his memory rendered

execrable." The conscience of Don Domenico revolted as a good priest, but he thought it best to remain silent and allow Francesco to proceed without opposition. "I say, as a man, he was quite different, and I can prove it. I have known some of his old countrymen and others, who were friars with him in the convent. Well; from them I know that he remembered his old acquaintances, and sent kind messages to several who, so far from dreaming of presenting themselves before him, would never have believed it possible that he could retain the slightest recollection of them. He remembered the humble friar, who, instead of ascending, like himself, to the highest grade, remained in his pristine obscurity; and Gregory rejoiced his heart by kind messages when he least expected them. He recollected the pious, sincere, and Christian persons he had formerly known; among others, an old parish priest, a distant relative, with whom he had been acquainted in his youth. This man was one of the Lord's servants, and was indefatigable in his duties, simple, tolerant, charitable, and devout. The Pope loaded him with honours, but he despised

them. He invested him with prelatie titles ; but though he accepted them, he refused to display their insignia. The Pope desired to see him, to gratify his eyes with the sight of a friend ; but this man, who would scarcely have hesitated to journey to the ends of the earth to offer consolation to a sufferer, would never go a step to see the Pope. Had the Pope been a friend in humble circumstances, he would unhesitatingly have gone to Rome ; but notwithstanding that he received repeated invitations, he never entered the Vatican, because there riches and honours awaited him ; and the Pope—here not the Pope, but the man—appreciated him still more highly, and transmitted him the most tender expressions of regard.

“He shed honours profusely among the worthy of his old associates, while the evil he altogether neglected. Of the companions of his early studies—ere he had assumed the priestly garb—he ever retained the most vivid recollection, as well as of his distant relatives, however poor ; and he ever retained a recollection of the friends of his infancy, though half a century or more might have elapsed since he had seen them. To some,

he unostentatiously sent succour in the time of need ; to others, verbal remembrances, and even presents. Gregory was the execration of the world as Pope, and yet young men of good character and liberal views, natives of his own country, or sons of men whose only claim upon him was that of having in youth looked upon the same sky, of having inhaled the same air, of having enjoyed the same beauties offered by nature in mountains, valleys, plains, hills, lakes, and brooks—these, from such slender title alone, met with a gracious and friendly reception from this sanguinary Pope, and were caressed, honoured, and loaded with presents. I myself knew, in particular, one among them, a spirited young man and a true patriot, who went to Rome prejudiced against the Pope, but who returned quite enamoured of him. Gregory, when he saw a good mountaineer of his native place, was delighted to chat familiarly with him, and ask him a thousand questions about persons and things, expressing himself in the harsh and broken dialect of his country, which for so many years he had not spoken.

“ Gregory, as a man, then, was kind and good-

hearted, and even gentle, and as such was extolled by those who knew him before he was Pope. You see, then, that, with him, to be Pope and tyrannical were one and the same thing ; and thus he was two different men, the one good and the other bad. Catholic institutions naturally produce this effect. Papacy sustains itself by immorality, tyranny, intolerance, and cruelty—and a man who will be a true Pope, must be cruel, intolerant, and tyrannical. This is why I can hope for no good from your Mastai, who, as Mastai, may be an excellent man, but, as Pope, cannot be other than Pope.”

Poor Don Domenico's mind was completely overturned by this reasoning. He felt almost convinced, but was obstinate, like all sectarians. He answered—

“ I will not deny, after that which you said, the truth of your remarks respecting Gregory, nor that the Papacy has its abuses ; but it is that very thing which makes me hope much from the present Pope, because he is not only good, but disposed to abolish abuses.”

“ It cannot be,” answered Francesco. “ Good may be abused and reformed, but not evil. The

reform of Papacy implies nothing less than its destruction: without being destroyed, it can never be reformed."

"That is just the point on which I cannot agree with you. I hope for a reform of the Papacy by means of the present Pope, without its destruction."

"And that is an impossibility, I can prove to you," concluded Francesco; and so the two friends parted to meet again at dinner time.

CHAPTER III.

THE "GENTLEMAN IN BLACK" INVOKES THE
INFERNAL DEITIES WITH IMPIETY WORSE
THAN IDOLATRY.

WHILE such objects were agitating the breasts of noble-minded Italians, the tempest-tost bosom of Don Giuseppe was a stranger to repose. The consciousness of recent defeat rendered him furious. The scene which had taken place between himself and the Countess could never be obliterated from the memory of either. He stood with one foot over the precipice, and felt himself impelled downwards to the abyss below. He just retained, however, sufficient strength and presence of mind to shrink back in horror at the moment he was about to make the awful plunge,

and once more to regain a firm footing. But how changed ! His soul was filled with a mixture of hardihood and indefinable timidity. Conquered by fear, he was bland, servile, and smooth, hoping to win back from her a look of confidence. Now his natural daring would win the day, and he would be haughty in his bearing, peremptory in his commands, disdainful in conversation. These alternations of fear and haughtiness were so apparent in his manner, that they were remarked by every one in the house, and especially by the Countess. She was, however, too good and pious to make any comments ; indeed, she pitied him, and, believing that he was excited by a spirit of exaggerated zeal for her good, sought to mitigate the tempest of his soul by dignified and gentle amiability. A doubt might sometimes cross her mind, it is true, as to his wicked intentions, but it quickly vanished. When does a devotee ever suspect a priest, even in the face of the most palpable proof ? A devotional woman, with respect to a priest, believes neither that which she sees with her own eyes, nor that which she hears with her own ears ; nor will she even, frequently,

believe in the most striking combination of facts.

The Countess, however, had withdrawn from Don Giuseppe the confidence that she had formerly reposed in him, and no longer made him her counsellor. Here the tact of the woman had triumphed over the blindness of the devotee. The face of the priest was in a few days completely transformed, and had grown thin and pallid. His eye was sometimes wandering and uncertain, sometimes fixed, but always sinister in its expression. Sometimes it exhibited a pretence of meekness and gentleness, but it was the gentleness of the charmer. The ire it emitted was the cruel ire of the assassin. But no one in the house noted the changeful expression of his eye; it was only his varying humour which was the subject of remark. The Count took no heed at all. At no period of his life had he been very clear-sighted, and declining health now plunged him into a state of stupid apathy.

What ruin had the destructive tempest of passion wrought in Don Giuseppe! The blow destined for the Countess having failed; he

turned his attention to another object. Again he recommenced his sanguinary plans of vengeance against Francesco. Should he move sea and land to obtain it, vengeance he was determined to have—vengeance was his life, his very being. He will entwine himself about his foe like a serpent. He will plunge him into the abyss of grief; he will himself fall with him to be witness of his destruction. The darkness of the infernal pit will be illuminated by a tremendous glare when, both clasped together, they penetrate its horrors,—his enemy and he locked in an infernal embrace. Midst sudden flashes, his rival shall see his face, and know who encircles him, and shall loathe his embrace more than that of a demon, and, sinking lower and lower, he himself will utter a cry of vituperous and vaunting frenzy, and in this rite of immortal hate both will plunge into the deep with their bodies lacerated and dismembered. This is no poetry. It is the real thought which, in the excitement of hate, inflamed the fancy of the priest. No, it is not poetry; it is the reality of furious passion, exciting itself to delirium. Then poetry is reality; it becomes life,—and this is reality; and it is not

poetry, but reality, to say that the priest felt a strange and unworked emotion of tenderness, springing directly from an accused and devilish sentiment, an impious conviction,—and in his execrable concentration of spirit, he invokes the demon. His fell invocation was heard. The ruler of darkness inspired him with a sudden light; a sanguinary, terrific, destructive impulse. It is certain, and is no illusion :—his enemy shall be ruined for ever, and he will be the triumphant spectator of his fall. He no longer doubts. Satan gifts him with second sight, and he, in profoundest adoration, renders thanks to Satan, and rises no less bold than his master to set about the accomplishment of his hellish plans.

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CHAPTER IV.

WHICH, FOR THE SAKE OF VARIETY, GIVES
THE REVIEW OF A BOOK.

A YEAR had scarcely elapsed since an anonymous work, of combined religious and political tendency, had been introduced into Italy, from Switzerland. The theological argument was treated in somewhat metaphysical style, but its tendency was decidedly moral and religious. This work made a vigorous, though moderate attack upon Rome. Rome proudly vaunts her unity, to prove her divine origin, as compared with the differences of other sects called Christian. She pretends to purity of morals, and identity of sentiment in her dogmas among all the faithful, without exception. This work attacked the Romish church on two grounds; her boasted

unity, and the purity of her faith and of her moral practice. With regard to the former, having given the philosophical definition of unity, and established its conditions in a metaphysical sense, the book proceeded to demonstrate that the church of Rome maintained its unity in a manner contrary to the metaphysical conception of unity; because, according to this standard, unity results from the harmony and adhesion of parts, by the homogeneous relationship of one with the other, kept in intimate and spontaneous connection, as forming one perfect whole: while the unity of the Roman church is imposed and coerced by external force and violence, without which its elements would quickly segregate. Hence the work went on to show that the agents of external force imposed for this end, were in themselves evil, fallacious, and anti-evangelical. The unity of Rome is maintained by means of the ignorance in which the priests keep the people immersed. This unity proceeds from the prejudices excited in the minds of the people by the clergy, and their religious system. It is, moreover, maintained by immorality. Tyranny, in fact, is strengthened and confirmed by the corrup-

tions of the people ; in their virtue is its peril. So despotism, said the book, maintains slavery by means of corruption. But despotism maintains Rome also : thus Rome sustains corruption either directly or indirectly, and must of necessity continue to do so, would she maintain her unity. When these other means fail, she has recourse to force. Hence Inquisition, state trials, and imprisonment for those who dissent. Hence the required aid of foreign bayonets to impose, at the sword's point, a faith abhorrent to the people, from whose subjection they would gladly free themselves. To preserve the unity of the church of Rome, it was shown that the arms of tyranny were essentially necessary. The writer proceeded to institute a parallel between the characters composing the church of Rome and that of Christ, as drawn in the sacred page ; and he concluded that the church of Rome was altogether wanting in the characteristics marking the true church. Being maintained by means essentially vicious, her unity was only apparent, not real. It declared therefore, that if the gates of hell, according to the promise, should not prevail against the church, this passage could

not apply to her, as she pretends, because she is not the true church of Christ, for she is based upon ignorance, prejudice, corruption, and violence, which are infernal and not celestial emanations.

The second part, which treated of the doctrine and morality of the Roman church, began by demonstrating the improbability that God should take human flesh, and manifest himself on earth, to effect the salvation of the human race, and then leave so imperfect a code of belief, and so insufficient a rule of action for man, that he could not practically learn what he was to believe, or to do; and that it was not to be presumed that God would leave his work unfinished for man to complete it, and claim the credit of having corrected God's work, which is certainly the case, judging from the manner in which the Scriptures are taken and interpreted by Rome. She pretends that the sacred oracles are obscure, and cannot, under any circumstances, be understood and explained by themselves, but that men must interpret them, to render them intelligible to fellow-men. Therefore, he who cannot avail himself of an interpreter, or who has not intelligence to fathom the many mysteries of the

Roman interpretation, has no means of securing salvation. Thus, man must correct God's error, and render the doctrine clear which He has left obscure. And thus, the book proceeded, demonstrating that the Romish interpretation of passages, which she pretended were obscure, led men into the most monstrous absurdities and corruptions, both doctrinal and practical. Hence, her additions and comments were productive of unmitigated evil to society. So the doctrine of purgatory, of confession, of transubstantiation in the Eucharist; so the doctrine of indulgences, of the adoration of images; so the discipline of fasting and abstinence from food, of the celibacy of the priests, and various other doctrines and precepts, if just, must have borne good fruits, but, as being gratuitous and unauthorized by Scripture, they were—the writer argued—therefore conducive to the most immoral results. The book then proceeded to discuss one by one, the evils arising to Christians from the additions made by men to the gospel. From this root spring impiety, religious indifference, hypocrisy and immorality, and every sort of corruption. How different the state of those countries which

have refrained from adopting these man-made additions, simply because they do not find them in the gospel, from that of countries that have embraced them. Thus, the author concluded, "it is plain they are impious, because they pretend to correct the work of God, and in this very attempt they cannot produce any good upon the earth, but much harm." Incalculable indeed is the mass of evils which actually take their rise in these additions to the gospel, made by men who pretend to Divine assistance.

This work was secretly circulated throughout Italy, and read with great avidity, and it was the means of enlightenment to many sincere but deluded Christians. It excited the fury of the clergy, and of the political Power, and induced both to make the most searching investigations, in order to discover the author. Could they have found him, in their hands he need have looked for little mercy. They paid spies, employed emissaries, and despatched messengers to search the spot whence the work professed to issue—but all to no purpose. The police endeavoured to scent the track of the writer, and hunt him down like a wild beast. But all their efforts

were unavailing. He was neither known nor suspected.

Don Giuseppe read the book, and secretly admired and approved it, as much as it was possible for an infidel to appreciate the work of a believer, though in public he protested against it. With regard to its authorship, he knew no more than others.

CHAPTER V.

EFFECTS OF AN IMPIOUS INVOCATION. THE
SPIRIT OF SATAN IDENTIFIED WITH THAT
OF THE MAN.

DON GIUSEPPE had just finished reading the book which had produced so great an excitement, and it was lying upon the table in his room. His eye fell upon it by chance, and an idea connected with the book presented itself to him as by magnetism. This idea was a revelation. The name of Francesco he saw there impressed in large mysterious characters, invisible to every eye save his. "Francesco," he read in burning characters within, without, and on every side. His mind at once conceived a thought, of which he had previously not the most distant idea. Now it shone before him

with the utmost clearness. He felt as well assured of the authorship as if he had been witness to the act of composition in the privacy of Francesco's study. By intuition, he felt it more certainly, and more evidently, than if it had been supported by mathematical proof. To him it was more striking. He could scarcely restrain a cry of infernal joy, a sepulchral prolonged laugh like that uttered by the famished hyena at sight of the bleeding morsel which his keeper throws into his den. Its cry is like the sound uttered by Don Giuseppe : and still more was it so that moment, because issuing from a true hyena's heart. Rushing on the book, with hands convulsed, he rapaciously seized it. It seemed as if his fingers elongated, curved, and became claws. In his fury of prey, a truly animal instinct took possession of him. He opened the book, eagerly scanned its contents, his glistening pupils resting upon it here and there, sparkling with infernal brightness. He read again the most striking passages. Doubt as to its authorship was no longer possible. He seemed not to be perusing a book, but the innermost soul of Francesco. The style was

undoubtedly his. It was marked by the distinct and peculiar eloquence of which every superior intellect presents its own model, each differing from all others. He fully recognised the characteristics of that style which he so much envied when they were together in the seminary—that morning of a resplendent day. He recognised the bold, free, energetic thought, the maturity of judgment, and clearness of mind, shown in the chain of reasoning. He recognised that strain of noble and pungent irony which, while neither satirical nor envenomed, is more severe than either. He recognised the vivacious fancy and lively imagination of Francesco, and a certain attractive grace with which he knew he could so well adorn any argument, even the most abstruse. He recognised the strain of melancholy which pervaded the composition. It was evidently the production of one whose heart was suffering; not of him who only pretends to have suffered. Further, he recognised some of the ideas themselves, as those he had heard expressed by his hated rival in the Seminary, and elsewhere. He recognised some of the thoughts, and more than one referring to un-

happy love that could have been traced by none but himself; and, finally, he believed he recognised his own portrait painted in the boldest and most reproachful colouring.

Open and clear though all this now seemed to him, let not the reader accuse Francesco of want of prudence, supposing even that he was the author. Taken by itself, the book could demonstrate nothing of all this—with so much tact and secret meaning was it written—and Don Giuseppe himself had read it through without making any such discovery. But he was now gifted with preternatural insight through his invocation of Satanic power:—in other words, converting his natural endowments to malignant uses, sold to the earthly devil, Suspicion, habituated to employ the sacred office treacherously,—specially incited just now by a perverse desire, and his ever presented hatred of Francesco, his wish of malice to discover ill,—guided him to find his enemy in the book, the book in his enemy, and the instrument of his vengeance in that Hell which the Roman Church has created upon earth.

CHAPTER VI.

A CLEVER PROFESSOR TEACHES A RED-LEGGED
BIRD TO SING AS HE PLEASES.

THE wicked actions of Don Giuseppe, resulting from his prevarications and machinations, had not yet reduced him to a state of total and abject degradation. All his crimes and wickedness had hitherto borne a vigorous and daring character. His wanderings from the path of rectitude had led him to assume the fierceness of the savage brute, but not the crawling of the insect. Prostrate even at the feet of a woman, in lowly and supplicating attitude, he might appear humbled and depressed, but not abject. He knelt to the woman he adored, not apparently from fear, or the humiliation of the slave, but from overwhelming love. But his

wicked passion was fated to lead him through every stage of guilt. He was to load himself with crimes not only, but with opprobrium too. Miserable man ! His proud soul now stooped to a villany that the most degraded of human beings can with difficulty bring themselves to commit. He contemplated an action which a man wanting a morsel of bread would shun ; from which one accustomed to deceit and robbery would shrink ; an action which would surely be scorned by assassins. Don Giuseppe was about to join the phalanx of degraded beings, inferior to the veriest dregs of society—to humble that proud head to the earth—to degrade his lofty, indomitable mind to the most abject defilement, beneath that of the most degraded. He was about to become a *spy*. He, priest-clad—but no matter ! Among priests the trade of a spy is honourable. It is exalted to a system, and rewarded by titles and rank. He belonged to the long-robed class, and hence could act the spy without shame. It is the most honourable art of the Jesuits, and, by practising this trade, Don Giuseppe will but enrol himself in their corps, which, indeed, constitutes a high and honoured class in society !

Were Francesco discovered as the author of the book, he would be condemned for twenty years, or possibly for life, to the Castle of Spielberg ; a place which has rendered the cruelty of Austria towards her political prisoners almost as famous as Siberia has rendered Russia. Don Giuseppe desired therefore to accuse Francesco of this crime, in order that he should be condemned. But in accusing him, he would not expose himself to the most distant peril of being recognised. He might write an anonymous letter to the Police, or the Ecclesiastical Court, for both readily listened to unsigned accusations. But it was known to some persons, that between him and Francesco hate only could exist ; therefore, should it become a matter of notoriety that the author of the book was discovered by means of an anonymous letter, he might not escape suspicion of being the writer of it.

He might pay a secret visit to a magistrate or prelate ; but this he would not do, as he was determined no living being should know him as a spy. He resorted, therefore, to another expedient.

In pursuance of his plan, he went to pay his

respects to a reverend Canon. The countenance of the dignitary expressed benignity, and his manners were extremely courteous. His person, inclined to *embonpoint*, which was not however ungraceful. His conversation was pleasing, his habits were simple, and his eye wore an expression of gentleness. He was a most valuable instrument of tyranny for making discoveries, both religious and political; and was really unrivalled for tact in extracting secrets from the mouths of youths and women, and even sometimes from men of mature age and experience. His deportment exhibited so much good-natured simplicity, his smile was so winning, his religious tolerance apparently so wise and enlightened, his political principles professedly so liberal, his face so youthfully fresh and rosy—though he was perhaps nearly fifty—he was so surrounded with the comforts of life, and with the esteem and love of all, that it was impossible to suspect him of being a spy. Such at least was the belief of the good Canon, who hugged himself complacently while reflecting on his many physical and moral characteristics, in such direct contradiction with his base, but lucrative trade. In

his vain-glorious self-congratulation, he promised himself ever to retain the lucre, and escape the infamy belonging to his calling. Yet he was dependent, though it is true upon one alone, and that one occupying a high position. To the Commissary-General of Police he reported the revelations he gathered from the poor victims whose confidence he betrayed. The Commissary-General received in those times visits from nobles, priests, and magistrates. From the first, through the natural vileness often to be met with in oppressed countries among those beings of lofty birth and abject soul ; from the second, through uniformity of interests, for the civil and religious powers mutually sustain each other ; and he was visited by magistrates through duty. Don Giuseppe also visited him, because, although he had not yet had any business to transact in that way, his plans not having yet required it, still, he loved the executive power, not for itself, but for its construction. The mysteries, arts, and secret manœuvres of the police were quite adapted to his taste. The Canon, to whom we refer frequently, went as if to pay a simple visit ; but

in these visits, unperceived by others, secret conferences were held.

Don Giuseppe by chance one day, not long before he happened to read the dangerous book, called upon the Commissary-General of Police. He was scarcely seated, when the Canon was announced. The commissary, who was a German, and consequently not quite so astute as those Italians whom Dante placed in the pit reserved for the betrayers of their country, seemed ill at ease at this fresh arrival, as if embarrassed by the presence of Don Giuseppe. Don Giuseppe had certainly, as the reader will allow, a very acute eye. A thought flashed through his mind ; the Canon entered, notwithstanding, for he never dared to give any appearance of mystery to his visits by asking if there was company, lest he should expose himself to the suspicions of the servants. With his usual penetration, Don Giuseppe remarked that the Canon coloured and appeared slightly confused on seeing him. The reverend dignitary was an adept at dissimulation, as we have already said, and no one else would have noticed his confusion ; but Don Giuseppe had the eye of

a lynx for reading the hearts of others—and in the heart of the good and sleek Canon at that moment he discovered innumerable mysteries of turpitude and abomination. Don Giuseppe's satisfaction was twofold. A man in his state of mind rejoices in evil for its own sake ; and at that moment he felt himself superior to such an abject wretch. He remained a short time to render his certainty still more complete, and read "spy," evidently and strikingly impressed upon the man's forehead. Having read this, he took his leave, delighted with the discovery, and resolving to avail himself of it whenever the necessity might arise.

The necessity had now arisen. He saw that by means of the Canon he might securely advance a step without exposing himself. The Canon believed himself wholly unsuspected ; otherwise retaining the remains of his honour and self-esteem, he would at once have renounced the employment and its handsome emolument. Don Giuseppe, therefore, as we have mentioned, in the present circumstance, paid a visit to the unsuspecting Canon, and in the course of conversation he skilfully expressed

his suspicion, as if addressing a discreet, liberal, and tolerant man, without mentioning the name of the suspected author, just saying enough to indicate him clearly while feigning unwillingness to do so ; and thus he acted the spy in safety.

From that time his mind enjoyed a truce, for he could settle down in the dear delight of vengeance accomplished.

CHAPTER VII.

CONVERSATION OF A SPIRITUAL GROUP LITTLE
CALCULATED TO SPIRITUALIZE THE MIND OF
THE UNSPIRITUAL READER.

It is growing late, about three hours before midnight. An evening party invites the attention of the reader. The assemblage is not, however, composed of the brilliant and vivacious of the gay world. Laughing youth and beauty, with their charming follies, do not there gladden the heart, nor shed temporary oblivion over the ills of life. The company is grave, self-possessed, and severe, and consists of some half-score old ladies who, with all the pretension of age, no longer hoping to please, seek to impose reverence; two or three young ladies, who slightly relieve the monotonous solemnity hanging over

the scene, but who, to avoid being altogether passed by, are compelled to assume something of the stately dignity of age ; five or six priests, and about the same number of gentlemen, either old, or wearing an air of mature judgment, whether real or feigned is of little importance, complete the group. The lady of the house who is entertaining this select company, is past the age of sixty. She bears traces of extraordinary beauty not altogether extinct. Her once animated but now rigid face is graven with wrinkles, ill-concealed by cosmetics. She had indulged an attachment for many years after she became a widow—but age had cooled her lover, and she was now left solitary and desolate. The priests cast their eyes upon her, and seized a propitious moment for making her their prey. In her weary solitude she needed consolation—and the priests, charitable as they are, were of course ready to offer it. Lost to her all hope of being able to turn her heart once more to the delicious dreams of love—for in the realm of love of what avail is a young heart in an old body ?—she turned her attention to the more serious considerations of religion ; not to

spontaneous but enforced religion, urged by bitter reflections upon joys fled past recall. Hers is the cruel, superstitious, agitating religion of the old devotee, who can no longer indulge in youthful freedoms. She is a true Jesuitess, and a most magnificent acquisition for the priests. The graces of her past youth are revoltingly caricatured in her assumed tones, soft, subdued, and unctuous. The tender sounds formerly consecrated to profane objects, are now made subservient to religion. The priests seize with avidity the gentle accents springing from that pious heart, exhibit ecstasies of ineffable delight, and respond with winning words expressive of sweet spiritual affection. Hers, towards the youthful and middle-aged, are far more sincere, than theirs towards the whilom sinner and actual penitent. Had her conversion occurred thirty years earlier, or had she been born thirty years later, the case would have been different.

Cards have not yet been introduced, but the tables are prepared, and gaming will soon commence. The hostess, the Countess Bonfadio, is in close conversation with one of her priests, the most spiritually merry, and the most car-

nally holy of the company. The other priests need no description. They all tell the same tale of pedantic seriousness, of heavy mirth, of ypocritical reserve, of youthful shyness or unblushing impudence, according to their conditions as novices or adepts—a tale that would be only a monotonous reproduction of previous passages of our history. Nor shall we describe the one who is in conference with the lady. The reader has only to refer to the preceding chapter to recognise him. It is the amiable, graceful, gentle *bon-vivant*, the Canon, who is the spy of Government.

The Countess did not know his true character. Villany, treason, and meanness are always abhorred by woman—by far the better part of the corrupt human species—however devout, hypocritical, or Jesuitical she may be; and the Countess, who would have deified an Inquisitor, would never have suffered a spy in her house. The discourse between the Countess and the Canon continued until interrupted by the game.

“So,” said the Countess, “the wicked man who wrote that abominable book is discovered.”

"I do not speak from my own knowledge, my lady," answered the Canon, who was always careful that he should not appear too well informed, "it was the Patriarch who told me so. I asked him no questions ; but Monsignore the Patriarch is most condescending, and frequently honours me with his confidence."

"He gave you further information, did he?" asked the Countess, whose curiosity was purposely excited by the wily Canon ; for in satisfying it, he expected to be paid with "ready money," through the sale of wares spiritual.

"Yes, madam ; he told me that the probable writer of the diabolical book had been indicated to the Government and the Ecclesiastical Court. He did not say by whom, and of course I did not venture to inquire. The Government, acting on the suspicions, have been making active investigations. They have sent carefully to retrace the travels which were made by a certain individual, and persons were dispatched to the places where he stopped during a tour he made in Switzerland. They have written to their secret agents thereto make the necessary inquiry with all prudence. All their researches have been con-

ducted with so much cleverness and caution, that there is very little doubt they have discovered the right person. The ultimate legal proofs alone are wanting, but in the meantime he will be captured and examined."

"And if he should be innocent?" said the Jesuitess, anxiously, with a woman's natural instinct.

"Oh, he cannot be innocent. The suspicions and presumptions against him are so strong, that they authorize decisive steps. And then, even supposing him to be innocent, if you compare the evils that such a man would do to society and religion if guilty, with the slight individual suffering of one man, even though he be innocent, you ought to feel no uncertainty about it. Whether the man is guilty or not, he must be accused and tried."

"You are, perhaps, right, monsignore," said she, "but I cannot help feeling troubled at the idea of his suffering unjustly. But let us hope it will not be so," added the good woman, ingeniously, with an admirable burst of logic, "and that he will be punished according to his deserts."

"Oh, there is no fear of that," answered the Canon; "and if he is found guilty, he will pass the rest of his days in prison."

"The rest of his days in prison!" repeated she. "But his life will not be long, I suppose; for he must be of mature age to be able to think of the extraordinary things that they tell me his book contains."

"No," said the Canon. "If it prove to be the person suspected, he is quite a young man, amiable and gentlemanly, and of most pleasing appearance. He is held in great consideration, according to the account of Monsignore the Patriarch, in his own town of Lunaco, a small place among the Alps, and he was one of the most distinguished of the students at the University of Padua."

"Let us hope he will be found innocent," answered the Jesuitess.

"I cannot hope so," said the Canon; adding, with abominable sophistry, "indeed I do not desire it, because, in that case, the author of the infamous work would still remain concealed, and might yet do further harm. In two days he will be arrested; not before, as the Patriarch told me,

because they are waiting for further information about him."

The Jesuitess was disposed to dissent from his opinion ; but the moment for commencing the game had arrived, and she let the argument drop, thinking no more of the poor young man about to be arrested and confined in a prison for life.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHICH, WHETHER APPERTAINING TO POETIC
IDEALITY OR TO PHILOSOPHICAL REALITY, IS
DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE:

IF the Countess Bonfadio forgot the suspected young man, not so another lady present. While the Countess and the Canon were conversing together, by chance, seated near them, with a book in her hand, was a lady, the most youthful of the party. Her age might be approaching thirty. It would be impossible to decide what was the principal attraction of that lovely character; whether the sweetness of her smile and look, her grace when she spoke, the fire of her countenance when she was moved, the noble indignation with which, when offended, she would utter a rebuke, her modesty when the

object of admiration, her sublimity when arguing on lofty matters, her simplicity when discovered indulging in an innocent confidence, or her dignified amiability in receiving and returning the ordinary courtesies of polished society. She was a perfect woman, unspoiled by the pretensions of education. Hers was the native perfection of the sex, unfettered by artifice and conventionalism.

Woman is a sublime being, not in the cold exercises of study, not in the multiplied forms of society—but in herself, and her own natural disposition. On the part of woman, knowledge is an inspiration. Courtesy, independently of the habits of refined life, is instinctive to her. Poetry, without any reading of verses and romances, springs up spontaneously in her heart. Gracefulness, without the necessity of tormenting her limbs in the extravagant attitudes of the dance, is diffused throughout every part of her frame. Goodness, unsuggested by the methodical precepts of schoolmen, reigns in her heart, from its innate harmony with evangelical charity. Her prudence, which is not the effect of calculation, but of natural tact,

springing from affection, prevents her from being harmful to others, and especially those dear to her, and from prejudicing her own reputation. Her reserve is not the churlishness suggested by the ancient duenna, but natural and charming modesty. Her counsel is not that of reflection and experience, but of natural vivacity of conception ; this is the perfect model of woman. Poets have been inspired by such ; from such have painters taken their celestial models. These are the women who have excited the world's admiration. Such women are not formed amidst the numerous restrictions of society, to which the tender minds of girls are so often subjected, nor amidst the thousand trifles deemed essential to a polite education. The maiden who meditates much alone, who exercises her hand in material labour, and is cunning in the graceful productions of the needle—is all-sufficiently educated, when domestic example and familiar precept are combined to keep her in the right way. What treasures does she possess in her mental energy, in her original fancy, in her reflections upon her own sensations in the solitude of her chamber !

Such a woman as we have described, was the Signora degli Adorni, who was seated near the Countess and the Canon. The most charming and the sweetest of women, she was gifted with all the graces of a noble and elevated mind. She listened to the discourse, and felt interested in it, from a presentiment that can never err in privileged beings like her. She seemed involuntarily drawn to listen to what was said, and she did so almost in spite of herself, unheeded by the pair who talked loud enough to be heard by her without any effort. How often the most jealous secrets are disclosed by such unguarded talkers! Instinct taught her that, by listening, she might have the opportunity of counteracting evil; and, thanks to her prudent and not dishonorable attention, great good resulted to poor Francesco Fantoni. The narration of the manner in which it was effected we will reserve for the next chapters, leaving the company to their usual evening occupation of gaming. The priests generally separate shortly before midnight.

CHAPTER IX.

A MINERVA, NOT OF MYTHOLOGY AND FABULOUS ANTIQUITY, BUT FOUND IN MODERN SOCIETY.

TERESA ROBUSTI was the child of respectable citizens in comfortable circumstances. She received a plain and useful education. She studied neither languages, music, nor drawing, and was acquainted with her own tongue alone, nor of that had she a classical knowledge. But her soul was itself a harmony superior to all musical harmonies; her manner of expressing herself was a charming effusion of the sweetest and most striking images, born of natural sentiment, and worth far more than the power of torturing five or six foreign languages, and bar-

barously mangling her own. Design she had in herself, in her natural taste ; and with a readiness of hand and quickness of eye which might shame the most practised skill, she fashioned the appropriate attire which added grace to her own charms, and so well became the younger members of her family. She was an adept in all the arts of domestic economy, and, at the age of sixteen, was quite a blessing to the house. She seemed to possess the intuitive power of doing everything to perfection, for it would have been impossible to say where and how her facility was acquired. Every thing Teresa undertook seemed refined and elevated to artistic elegance. Nothing emanating from her hands wore the appearance of vulgarity, but, under her tasteful management, was embellished and ennobled. She was as cheerful and happy as she was generous and charitable and Christian-like and useful : indeed, usefulness and happiness are ever found combined.

A gentleman of noble family, the Signor degli Adorni, coming to call upon the father of Teresa on business, saw and admired his daughter. He was rich, and greatly respected. Their age

was considerably disproportioned. She was but sixteen, while he was forty, and of appearance by no means striking; but he was kind and gentlemanly, and a man of high principle. He sought her hand in marriage, and she, knowing nothing of love, and rather disposed to like him than otherwise, accepted him, in obedience to the wishes of her family. She was told she must accept him and love him, and she therefore consented to do so. The former was possible, but not the latter. Nevertheless, she felt a sincere friendship for her husband, and her virtue was spotless. He, on his part, was perfectly content, and desired nothing further. They were blessed with two children.

The Signor degli Adorni was cousin to the Countess Bonfadio. She was at first somewhat annoyed at the marriage of her cousin, who might have chosen an heiress, but she soon reconciled herself to it, and received his wife graciously. Teresa visited the Countess very frequently with her husband, who was fond of play, and thus it was she chanced to be there on the occasion referred to. The Signora accidentally and

unintentionally having heard the discourse relative to Francesco, determined her knowledge should not remain useless, and immediately endeavoured to render it profitable.

CHAPTER X.

THE MOMENTOUS IMPORTANCE OF WHICH
WILL BE GUESSED BY THE CLEAR-SIGHTED
READER.

SIGNOR DEGLI ADORNI was connected by family ties with Count Alfredini. Friendly relations existed between them, and they had often met. But when they two ladies became acquainted, the intimacy ripened into close friendship, and the soon loved each other with mutual tenderness. The heart of Amalia speedily warmed towards the noble woman, who was so superior in grace, sense, condescension, and true nobility of mind and heart. From their first interview, Amalia sought to cultivate her intimacy, and she, equally charmed with Amalia, was quite disposed to love her with

the most confiding warmth of affection, and most dear to both was the sweet and gentle tie that quickly united them.

The Countess narrated the melancholy history of her love to her friend, who offered her the tenderest sympathy.

CHAPTER XI.

A WOMAN, BY THE INSPIRATION OF HER
HEART, EFFECTS GREATER PURPOSES THAN
A GRAVE POLITICIAN BY HIS MENTAL CAL-
CULATION.

THE Signora degli Adorni had then, involuntarily in the first instance, but afterwards as a matter of judgment, gathered the sense of the discourse which passed between the Countess Bonfadio and the wily Canon. The result of her laudable *espionnage* was most satisfactory. She learned enough to thwart the cruel plans of the workers of iniquity. Knowing, or at least suspecting, that the person to be arrested was the friend of her own sweet friend, she congratulated herself on being able to make the case known to her, and assist her in concerting

measures to prevent the arrest before the expiration of the two days that still intervened.

The generous-hearted woman could scarcely close her eyes that night, from her anxiety as to the fate of Francesco. She knew nothing about the book, and it simply appeared to her an act of atrocious injustice, that a young man should be sacrificed for life, for expressing his opinions. Besides, her superior intelligence discovered many things in the Romish clergy and their doctrines which she could not approve. Nor was her mind so weak as to be frightened at entertaining these thoughts, her natural energy of character rendering her superior to such scruples. She felt then, that whether the writer of the book, whose contents she had never seen, were right or wrong, it was the duty of any one who had the opportunity, to save him; and save him she must: the more, since he was the object of the innocent affection of her dearest friend.

Urged by this noble purpose, early the following morning she entered her gondola, a little to the surprise of her attendants and that of her husband; he, however, forbore to make any

remark, and she only said she was going to pay a visit to the Countess Alfredini. She soon after entered her friend's house. They were at breakfast, and Don Giuseppe was with them. The Signora degli Adorni had never liked the priest. She entertained strong suspicions of him, and had often felt tempted to warn Amalia against him ; but shrunk from doing so while she had nothing to urge in confirmation of her suspicions. Nor did he like her. He always felt magnetized by her scrutinizing glance, which occasioned him an involuntary sensation of fear. He was perhaps the only man in the world who did not admire her, because he experienced that natural repulsion that the bad feel towards the good, when the latter have quick eyes to discern the secret workings of the heart.

The poor Signora felt truly on thorns, but deemed it prudent to avoid manifesting impatience. She waited until breakfast was over, and she was alone with her friend, before she hinted that she had anything of importance to communicate.

They were at length left to themselves. Don Giuseppe had retired to his room to study, or

perhaps to yield himself up to his accustomed meditations upon his unhappy love. The Count was engaged with his books of devotion. The Signora commenced,

"My dear Amalia, I have come to talk with you on an affair of the utmost importance."

"What can be the matter?" asked Amalia, anxiously. "Has any misfortune happened to you?"

"Not to me, but a great misfortune threatens one of your friends."

"What is the matter? most blessed Virgin!" exclaimed the too excitable Amalia, "which of my friends is threatened with misfortune?"

"Signor Francesco Fantoni," began the Signora, .

"Oh! gracious heaven!" exclaimed the unhappy woman.

"He is threatened with imprisonment, and I do not at present see any means of escape."

Amalia seemed ready to faint—but the intensity of her anguish inspired her with energy.

"Threatened with imprisonment!" exclaimed she; "Francesco . . . Fantoni!"

She well knew that he could have been guilty of no criminal action ; but she also knew quite well, that the most noble actions are often, under a tyrannical government, punished with imprisonment, irons, and even death. At this thought she felt ready to expire with fear.

" Do not be alarmed, dear Amalia," said her friend, kissing her, and endeavouring to inspire her with courage. " There may yet be time to avoid it, and that is why I have come to you now ; but strength and courage will be required."

" Oh, I am strong," exclaimed poor Amalia, affecting an energy and security she was far from feeling. " We will see about it at once. But what has happened to Francesco ? What must we do ? What is the danger that threatened him ? Who are his enemies ?" asked she, with a convulsive rapidity of utterance, that quite pained her friend. She answered,

" I beg of you to calm yourself. I hope we may yet be able to save him."

" Well, let us see about it at once. Tell me what is to be done. I am ready to do anything."

Thus she spoke, not heeding in her anxiety, that her interest in Francesco Fantoni exceeded the bounds of pure charity which ought to be the limit with the Countess Alfredini. The Signora degli Adorni narrated the conversation she had overheard the evening before, and Amalia trembled as she listened. Of the book she knew nothing. Don Giuseppe, to serve his own ends, and avoid the slightest suspicion in case of evil arising to Fantoni, had maintained a complete silence with regard to it; but Amalia well knew that a book written by Francesco was too likely to contain doctrines that she would consider heretical and irreligious, and her heart bled. The only consideration at present was to save him. Although his name had not been mentioned, there could be no doubt as to the person alluded to by the Canon. Then came the consideration as to how his safety was to be effected. Neither she, nor her friend, knew where he resided. But, by the aid of chance, which teaches so many things, and so often yields information the most precious, they were aware that Francesco frequented the Caff  Florian. Their only hope then was to find him

there, and apprise him of the danger. But by what means? To trust to a letter such an all-important matter, was a most dangerous and uncertain step. What to do then? How could they warn Francesco? It was, indeed, a very difficult task.

But to the mind of the Signora degli Adorni experience would not long be wanting; her judgment was ever prompt, and the resolution of an energetic character came to her aid. After a little consideration, a plan of succour occurred to her mind, clear and well-arranged as if it had been matured by a diplomatist in his cabinet, after days of reflection. If diplomacy depended upon the heart and made use of the heart in its operations, then prime ministers and cabinet councillors would be women, and the world would be happy!

"See here," said she to her friend, "listen to my plan. We have no means of seeing him until the evening, but then we shall be able to accomplish it, I feel certain. I will send a letter, without any signature, directed to him at the Caffé Florian, requesting him to be at the Caffé this evening at seven o'clock, where two ladies,

friends, whom he greatly respects, will meet him masked, as they desire to confer with him, and trust he will not fail. There is no doubt that during the day he will be at the *café*. He will find the letter there, and we have every reason to believe that he will wait to see us, for he is neither rude nor timid, nor can the invitation excite any suspicion in a *café* among hundreds of people. I will call for you here this evening. Without being seen, we can put on masks, and go to warn him of his danger. You must tell your lady's maid to procure two *bautte* to disguise us. I would propose doing this at my house, but my husband is more observing than yours, and would feel curious to know the motive that could induce us to go out in masks. Nor have I sufficient confidence in my maid, who has been with me only a short time, to trust her. Your husband will take no notice, and your faithful servant can be trusted to see about everything."

The idea certainly seemed the most feasible that could be devised, for they must have experienced innumerable difficulties in warning him of his danger in any other manner. Amalia,

encouraged by her friend, felt herself strong, and, to save Francesco, would have been willing to brave every danger. It was not love, but humanity that was now in question, and she therefore felt no scruples. Had she felt any, her friend would have removed them, for she saw, and knew better than Amalia, the distinction between good and evil. Evil her friend felt she would never do, therefore whatever she judged right must be good.

The letter was written by Signora degli Adorin. Though short and dignified, it manifested the most sincere interest in Francesco, and a strong desire to serve him. In order that they might not be compromised, it was confided to a stranger, with instructions to leave it at the *café* if, on inquiry, it were found likely, and even certain, that Fantoni would be there in the course of the day.* The Signora had the satisfaction to receive an affirmative reply, and returned home hopeful and secure in the certainty of having performed a good action, and trusting to the

* This is the common mode of finding people in Italy, where a man goes habitually to his *café* at fixed hours, as he does to his club in England.

Lord to render the result favourable. Her prayers were most earnestly seconded by those of Amalia.

Amalia summoned her faithful waiting woman, an old servant of the Fossombroni family, who was present at the birth of her young mistress, and loved her tenderly. The Countess ordered her to procure two masquerade dresses for herself and friend, as they wanted to perform an act of charity without being recognised. Her woman felt no suspicion. It would have been impossible for her to entertain a suspicion with regard to Amalia. She only trembled lest any evil should befall her beloved mistress. Don Giuseppe had so completely won her confidence by his pretended interest in the welfare of her lady, that everything of the slightest importance likely to affect the well-being of the Countess, directly or indirectly, she was in the habit of confiding, in the perfect good faith and simplicity of her heart, to the wily priest. The deluded old lady, therefore, thought it her duty on this occasion to tell Don Giuseppe of the order she had received, and express to him her fear that the kind heart of her mistress had led

her into a snare. This time the good woman had some ground for fear, for it really did seem a strange notion to assume a mask to perform an act of benevolence.

The brow of the priest contracted. He could not at all penetrate the mystery of so unusual and extraordinary a command. He thought awhile, and then said, "Her dear soul is confided to my care! I shall have to render an account of it to God! She must be watched that she does not fall into any danger. I see no other plan than following her myself, masked! God inspires me to do so, and you shall procure a dress for me at the same time as your lady's."

The good woman opened her eyes wide in admiration, and thought "what a holy man! he, too, is going to wear a mask for the sake of doing good!" and she could have worshipped him as a saint. For him, too, she procured a disguise!

CHAPTER XII.

OH, WHAT A WORLD OF MASKS !

WE are amidst a crowd of fates, sylphs, magicians, nuns, sheperdesses, flower-girls, milkmaids, peasantesses, and noble ladies of all ages, ranging from twenty to eighty, not on the stage, but in masks. A world of grave Spaniards, frivolous Parisians, fishermen, friars, highwaymen, punchinellos, harlequins, doctors and patri-cians, are before us in the Piazza di San Marco. The *Procuratie* are illuminated by torches with the utmost splendour, and overflowing with people of all classes, partly spectators and partly actors. The former watch the maskers, who with wonderful spirit, and a thousand playful sallies, keep up a fire of wit against the un-masked spectators.

It is seven o'clock in the evening. Here we see in costume a *Chiozzotto*, whose ordinary mode of speaking is most lively, with its strongly marked inflections and cadences. The poor fisherman of Chioggia is admirably sustained for the nonce by the millionaire.

There is an assumed Gondolier, who possesses both gondolas and gondoliers of his own, in right of his opulence and nobility, pilfering from the true gondolier his expressions, his phrases, his salient traits, his vernacular and his gestures, and producing a most attractive mask. He has a thousand things to tell, without waiting to be questioned, and hundreds, as he passes to and fro, listen to him delighted. There is the elegant Parisian dandy, with graceful airs, pouring forth compliments and flattery. With voice admirably softened, and with excellent mimicry of the Parisian accent, though in bad French, he utters with marvellous volubility a succession of disjointed words, conceits, and trifles.

The strange patois of the graceful *Buranella*, inhabitant of the island of Burano, is counterfeited by the lady of lofty pretensions, betrayed by her expensive attire, which, nevertheless, in

form and colour, is faithful to the character assumed. Her hands, too, give proof of gentle birth, and precious gems, though not ostentatiously displayed, add to her attractions.

Feigned nuns wearing the black dress, and employing the monastic insipidity of tone, cast a glance here and there, and exclaim with deprecatory lamentation, "Oh, what a world, what a world!" themselves gay ladies, who fully partake the pleasures of the world, masked or unmasked, indifferently.

It were vain to endeavour to describe the bustle and movement, and curiosity and good humour that prevail; the lively discourse, presumptuously pretending to wit and sense, or the really humourous sally and spirited *badinage*. Sprightly female masks approach the gentlemen and attack them, *volentes nolentes*, with remarks, interrogations, answers, and rejoinders; and, after tormenting them, escape, leaving them completely mystified, happy, or discontented, according to circumstances. Many are recognised, addressed by name, told of their private affairs and secret amours; reminded of past incidents and adventures, and matters which

they believed complete secrets, and are quite puzzled as to the identity of their fair tormentors, who are emboldened by their masks to make these malicious allusions.

The masks pass from *café* to *café*. The saloons are filled with ladies seated, and gentlemen standing without masks. All share in the revel and gaiety and chat. All seem wild with excitement. The heart of many a maiden trembles on the entrance of a fresh mask. Under that mask may be her lover, or his confidant or messenger, who may be the bearer of a grateful message. Comfits and flowers are given and received in great profusion. Gaiety is universal.

This is almost the last evening of the Carnival at Venice, and is most fruitful of incident to our acquaintances.

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO BENEFICENT GENIES IN MASKS APPEAR TO
MAN. AN EVIL GENIUS, ALSO MASKED,
SCOWLS UPON THEM.

Two masks in simple *bautta*, but showing indications of opulence in the every-day attire which appears beneath their disguise, attract, without intending or desiring it, considerable attention. Their figures are light and elegant, and possess a chaste and charming grace, which words are inadequate to describe. The form of one is rather more fully developed than that of the other, but without exhibiting so marked a difference that one can be considered more charming or more elegant than her companion. An equal difference marks their deportment.

One comes forward with facile grace and dignified freedom, displaying all the agreeable security and noble self-possession of a woman who, without ostentation of empire, moves with the consciousness of power and dominion. The other offers a model of grace in every movement of her person. Her step seems scarcely that of mortal woman, but of a being belonging to purer regions. Her carriage is, however, less free, secure, and decided, than that of her friend. The one charms by her noble and queen-like self-possession: the other by her natural timidity and ingenious simplicity of deportment. The one might have assumed the mask a thousand times, so much does she appear at her ease. The other seems as if she might wear the mask a thousand times, yet never feel at her ease—and with both it is the first time of assuming it. They abhorred masquerades, equally from womanly dignity and religious moderation of taste: and now it is only as a matter of life and death that they consent to mask. It would be an insult to the penetration of the reader to give names to the two masks.

A third mask claims our attention; wearing a

domino,—a long black gown, extremely full, enveloping the person entirely. This is a convenient disguise for any one desirous of masking or unmasking in a moment at pleasure. The bystanders would scarcely have believed that under this domino was a priest's vest, and that the hat covered the priestly tonsure,—but a priest it is of flesh and blood. With slow step and oblique track, and at a moderate distance, so as to avoid attracting attention, he follows the two beautiful masks. They are unconscious of being watched, though the stature of their follower is lofty, and his air noble and commanding. Their minds are too intent upon one object to observe anything else.

The two masks have entered the Caffé Florian, the least timid first, then the other, and shortly after they are followed by the domino. They pass through the apartments, examining all present, but see not the person they seek. Their hearts despond, after having passed in review all the rooms on the ground floor, without effect. The youngest trembles so violently, that she is compelled to lean on her companion for support. They enter the last room contain-

ing only men, the greater part old and sedate. These care not for the bustle and frivolity without.

The ladies enter this grave assemblage, and form an exception to the masks who, like strayed sheep, have by mistake looked in and speedily withdrawn in dismay. Not so our two masks. "There he is! that is he!" exclaimed the youngest, in suffocating tones. Though the other did not know him, scarcely had her friend uttered the exclamation, before she descried the young man occupying a middle seat on one side of the room, and recognised him by his noble aspect, severe brow, and impassibility of countenance, so expressive of indifference to the follies of the multitude. The domino heard the exclamation, saw to whom it referred, and congratulated himself that he had decided to mask and watch the ladies.

Francesco had received and read the letter, but paid no heed to it, believing it to be the jest of some *bel esprit*, but he thought it was as *well* for him to be at the Caff  at the hour named in the note. Happily at first he paid no attention to the masks, otherwise all might have

been betrayed. The elder of the two, instead of immediately approaching him, took a turn round the room, stopping now and then to say a word first to one old man then to another, observations that we, in our character of author, should be very much puzzled to repeat, and we ask ourselves as we write, "What could she find to say?" Certainly, however, her inventive genius and womanly readiness supplied her with something that greatly pleased the old wise-acres, and inspired them with respect for the fair masquer, for each grave face relaxed and assumed an expression of complacency and admiration;—but what she said must remain a woman's secret. The other timidly and in perfect silence followed her companion. Her very embarrassment had something in it graceful and winning. One eye observed that slight figure and graceful form, and seemed struck with surprise—it was the eye of Francesco; nor could he withdraw his gaze, though he could not have explained the fascination. He felt perplexed, and thought he knew the person who was moving towards him, yet could not determine who it was. It was as if in a far-off country he

had met with a face he had seen years and years before, without being able to decide whether he had really seen her before, or had only beheld her in a dream or in fancy.

Thus vaguely mysterious appeared to him the form and movements of the mask. Her face was hidden from him, but he would never have suspected who it was in reality. Not the slightest idea crossed his brain that it was Amalia, for an inconceivable idea cannot enter the mind. Yet involuntarily and as by 'magic his eye fixed itself upon the mysterious personage, and though scarcely taking cognizance of it himself, his soul experienced a sensation of pleased contentment. He did not reflect upon the sensations he experienced, or he would probably have accused himself of infidelity to Amalia,—though of this he was most assuredly guiltless, for in effect the influence of the feeling which possessed him would have been to attach him still more strongly to her. Meanwhile the two masks were approaching him. The one who addressed the gentleman on arriving close to Francesco, uttered an expression of surprise, and said—

"Ah! what I see?—A friend! I am, indeed, delighted! You are just the person I wanted to see! I am now going to puzzle you a bit!"

"It would be strange if you could puzzle me, fair mask," answered Francesco, with courteous *nonchalance*, "for we are perfect strangers to each other."

"Oh, but you are mistaken. We are old acquaintances."

"If you know me, fair mask, tell me my name."

"I can tell you your name, surname, residence, age, name of your beloved, and a great deal besides."

Francesco knew not whether this was a malicious joke or the effect of chance, and scarcely knew whether to continue the conversation or put an end to it at once. He, however, remarked—

"You say you know me, but you have not yet pronounced my name."

"Oh, certainly; I will tell you your name, and something more than that." So saying,

she leaned towards him, and whispered in his ear—

“Signor Francesco Fantoni, we have your interest at heart, and are really your friends. Within half an hour from this time be at the Campo di San Moisè. I shall be there, and my companion with me. Signor Fantoni, believe me—I speak seriously. Come—pray come. It is a matter of life and death. Mind, of *life* and *death*. A lady begs it as a favour of a gentleman—he will surely not refuse.”

All this was whispered in his ear by the noble woman, who, while she was speaking, cleverly maintained the light and trifling air adapted to her assumed character, and accompanied her entreaty by playful gestures and lively movement of her head and whole person, so that all present believed that that she was saying was nothing more than the satirical jesting and unimportant trifles with which the female masks are wont to tease the poor men. Nor did the countenance of Francesco change on listening to her serious words. Not a muscle of his face contracted to disturb the quiet smile which graced it; only for a moment his eye

seemed troubled—but instantly it regained its quiescent expression. He cast a penetrating glance upon the mask, and hesitated as to the answer he ought to make. It might be only a trick to induce him to go to the appointed place for nothing, and he had no fancy for practical jokes—or it might be a net spread for him by some adventurer, though in truth the appearance of the masks was little compatible with this idea. Again, it might be the device of an enemy, or it might really be as the lady stated. In this fluctuation of ideas he was about to interrogate her before promising, when looking again attentively at the two individuals, his eye caught a supplicating glance from beneath the mask of the other. Its effect was irresistible. He could offer to himself no explanation—but it penetrated to his very soul. He replied without further hesitation—

“Right, lady mask. You do know me quite well, though I have not the pleasure of recognising you. It is very cruel of you to be so mysterious, and excite my curiosity so strongly. Just favour me with one glimpse to see if I can recognise you.”

Thus saying, he slightly raised her veil from her mouth, which may be done without any breach of courtesy.

"Not now," said the beautiful mask; "half an hour hence. We shall meet again then."

"As you please, provided you will keep your appointment," and he gave her his hand. He offered his hand to the other also, saying, "And this beautiful mask, your companion, will she not speak one word?"

Her hand trembled, but though he did not notice her tremor, yet he felt within himself an inexplicable emotion. Her companion, fearing a recognition, which she especially desired to avoid, from regard to decorum, quickly replied—

"You are to talk to me, not to my companion. In half an hour you may speak."

They then left the room, but not before she had again addressed a few words to some of the gentlemen to avoid exciting suspicion. Those who heard her appointment with Francesco, believed that it was merely a masquerade freak, and that Francesco would never learn anything more about her. But the domino who hovered near them endeavouring to listen to what was said,

hearing something of meeting again in half-an-hour, well knew that it was no mere carnival frolic, but that some deep mystery lurked beneath. He determined to follow up his noble occupation of spy. Amalia, he very well knew, would never thus have exposed herself lightly; some reason of importance must exist, and his great anxiety was to discover it. When the masks took their departure, he followed them. Francesco saw him, but scarcely heeded him. He perhaps thought it was an attendant of the ladies, who accompanied them for protection, or he might even think he was one of their admirers; but he scarcely gave the subject a thought. He shortly after quitted the room to repair, according to agreement, to the Campo di S. Moisè.

During that half hour's interval, confidential arrangements were made by the two friends. To the Signora degli Adorni, whose thoughtfulness extended to every particular, it appeared that if their noble undertaking succeeded, it would be more prudent that Fantoni should not return home, because it was possible that the myrmidons of the police had only waited

until the evening to arrest him. He would have no time then to provide himself with money, and he might not even have enough in hand, She had two thousand francs which she could spare, and of which she had the absolute disposal; for her husband, who was rich, provided her most liberally with money for the realization of her many plans of charity, and she always had plenty of money in reserve. She thought, with true kindness, that her friend might not have enough, and that obstacles might arise to hinder Francesco's flight, if money were not forthcoming, and his loss might be the consequence. She told her friend, then, that to avoid all risk of delay, she had brought the money with her. Amalia was moved to tears, not for the pecuniary aid itself, but for her kindness and foresight. The Countess found herself almost without money at the moment, and naturally felt indisposed to ask it of her husband or any one else, under the circumstances. Although she knew it to be very imprudent, she had taken with her jewelry worth at least an equal sum with that provided by her friend, besides the loose cash she had in her possession,

thinking Francesco might require them, not only to ensure his flight, but for his support afterwards. She therefore said that she too had partially provided for the exigency ; but at the same time she was exceedingly glad to be spared the necessity of parting from her jewelry. Not that she was unwilling to deprive herself of it, as it will readily be believed. All that she possessed she would gladly have placed at Francesco's disposal ; but her sense of decorum would have forbidden her even to think of such a thing under any circumstances less urgent than the present. The money was therefore added to the rest by the Signora degli Adorni ; but she thought it better that Amalia should not discover herself, if she were not recognised.

CHAPTER XIV.

PICTURE, REPRESENTING TWO SWEET FEMALE MASKS IN CONFERENCE WITH A HANDSOME YOUNG MAN ; AN ILL-FAVOURED MALE MASK IN THE SHADE.

THE half hour has elapsed. The two ladies are at the appointed place. Francesco is there. In the shade of the picture is a figure in domino. Francesco approaches the two. One is tranquil, the other trembles. The eldest makes a sign to Francesco to advance to the middle of the Campo. This was an inspiration ; a mere trifle—and yet upon it how much depended ! Had they all remained to converse where they were at first standing, he would unwittingly have exposed himself to a spy ; and what would have been the consequence ? Close

to them, on one side of the place, almost hidden, was the figure in domino. They are now so far distant from him, that, though he can see them, he cannot hear them. He would willingly become blind—have his eyes sealed with the thick darkness of eternal night—could his ear but catch their words at that moment!

“Charming masks, whether it be in jest or in earnest,” said Francesco cavalierly, “I am delighted to enjoy the confidence of two such gracious ladies as yourselves, who deign to address me in the playful and pleasing manner authorised by the mask to the most scrupulous of women. But if it be in earnest, as seems to me most probable, I shall indeed consider it a privilege to discuss weighty matters with two such elegant *incognite*.”

He spoke with a mixture of playfulness and gravity, desiring, if it were simply a joke, delicately to reprove the fair authors of it, or if it were really an affair of importance, to show himself quite prepared to act, though with prudence, as implied by the use of the word *incognite*. The Signora at once replied—

“Indeed we are in earnest, Signor Fantoni ;

far more so than you can possibly imagine. It is a matter of life and death relating to yourself."

"I cannot imagine what affair of such serious importance can relate to me," said Francesco, though with a slight degree of agitation.

"Signor Fantoni, it is a matter of great importance. A book has been published giving great offence to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. The author has been discovered, and is to be arrested either to-night or to-morrow morning."

"I have nothing to do with the authorities," said Francesco, though his manly breast involuntarily heaved with emotion, "and I leave the authorities that be, both civil and ecclesiastical, to do what they think best with anybody they please. I have nothing to fear, for I have done nothing wrong."

Thus he answered, thinking it the safest plan not to expose himself, but to answer evasively lest his new friends should prove to be enemies.

"But if you are implicated in any way, you must place yourself in safety. We do not ask you to confess; we only beg, if you have had

anything to do in the matter, that you will escape. They are friends who thus entreat you."

"Oh, yes, we are friends!" exclaimed the hitherto silent mask inadvertently.

At the sound of those sweet accents, a light seemed to break in upon his mind. It was a well-known voice; it touched a familiar chord in his heart which produced a delightful vibration. Instantly he took the hand of the sweet mask, and led her to the light of the lamp. She trembled violently. He gazed into her eyes and drank in them ineffable sweetness. He raised her veil a little; she offered no resistance. With unspeakable delight he lifted her hand to his lips, saying—

"Life will indeed be precious to me henceforth; for if I live, my life will be a gift of yours."

The domino who had hitherto kept himself concealed in a corner, heard these words, for the lamp was near the spot where he stood. Happily he misunderstood their sense. Darkness clouded his mind at the moment, and his intellectual faculties were obscured. He understood the ex-

pression in a purely amorous sense, for thus did jealousy induce him to construe it. Giving the strangest signification to the words, owing to the agitation of passion, he thought that Francesco alluded to the approaching death of the Count. He imagined that Amalia had told him that he had not long to live, and had promised on his death to marry Francesco. Nor could he possibly put any other construction upon her words, as he had no idea that either of the ladies knew anything of the affair of the book, or of the arrest. In his anxiety to hear more distinctly, he advanced a little, without perceiving that, though himself hidden from them, his shadow fell upon the opposite wall. Francesco saw the shadow as it moved. It excited his suspicion for a moment, though he did not deem it a matter of any importance. Still holding her hand, he led her again to the middle of the campo, and said, "Countess Amalia, I feel myself happy, that if I am saved from my peril, it will be by your aid, and that of your friend, whom—though I know her not at present—I shall always remember in connexion with yourself, as my guardian angel."

"This lady," said Amalia, with choking emotion, "is indeed my best friend. She knows every secret of my heart, and she it was who discovered your danger, Francesco—Signor Fantoni"—hastily added she, correcting herself: but Francesco corrected her correction—"let me introduce you to the Signora degli Adorni."

"Had I no other reasons, this only would suffice to make me love life," said Francesco, kissing the hand of the Signora degli Adorni, with respectful emotion. "The gift of two such noble women, I shall value it as a treasure."

The sense of these words was most exquisite, taken simply as a complimentary expression, but how many sentiments beside did they reveal! The Signora—the wisest of the three—remarked,

"We ought to separate, for you have not a moment to lose, and it is not prudent thus to remain any longer. You cannot return home, and therefore Amalia and I have provided ourselves with the money needful for your journey, and sufficient for your use until you can obtain supplies from home." She handed him the 2000 francs, which he accepted, saying,

"Many thanks. It would be a misplaced scruple were I to refuse it at such a time."

"A noble sentiment, and worthy of the gentleman who utters it! We thank you sincerely for your acceptance of our offering," said the Signora. Amalia spoke not, but pressed his hand.

The domino, in his anxiety to hear the conversation, thoughtlessly advanced a step or two, and ~~was~~ discovered by Francesco, who had for some moments ~~been~~ attentively watching the person concealed, though he ~~had made~~ no remark, being fearful of alarming the ladies. He said, "We shall be observed, and I must now take care of my life, it has become so precious to me. My heart will ever revert to the friend of my childhood, and with her image will always be united that of her bosom friend. I shall remember both with affection and reverence." He kissed the hand of both, but he could not resist the impulse of his emotion. He raised the veil of Amalia's mask, and lightly joined his lips to hers. This was the kiss of two pure hearts, given and returned as angels in heaven may embrace. It was perhaps their

last adieu. The rigidly severe may deem this culpable indulgence of feeling; but God pardoned it, though it was not pardoned by the mask in domino.

CHAPTER XV.

SECOND PICTURE. THE ILL-FAVOURED MASK
PLACED IN FULL LIGHT, THOUGH STILL RE-
TAINING HIS MASK.

IMMEDIATELY after the departure of the two ladies, the domino, by a slightly circuitous path, followed them, himself being followed, unperceived, by Francesco. He now knew with certainty that the domino followed them intentionally, and was fully confirmed in his suspicions. He waited until the two ladies had turned the corner of a street, lest looking back, they might see him and the odious domino. When the domino, a moment after, was about to take the same turning, he was joined by our hero, who, taking him by the arm, said, with sarcastic civility, "Dear mask, pray stop a

moment I beg, before you pursue your business.' The man was become a coward! He trembled with abject fear, at this intimation. Oh! how unlike himself was he! He cursed his boldness, and would rather have been a hundred yards underground, than facing his mortal enemy. He made an incredible effort, by the force of his will, which never failed him in moments of extremity. With a feigned voice, that he might not be recognized, he answered,

"I have nothing to do with you; go about your business, ruffian!"

"I know very well," answered Francesco, "that you do not wish to have anything to do with me at this moment, but I have something to say to you."

"I believe you mean to assault and rob me," said he, with an affectation of bravery that excited Francesco to one of those bursts of laughter which had once before penetrated to his heart, and now sounded still more terrible. It seemed to him as though the acute eye of Francesco was fixed upon his, penetrating through his mask with a glance of triumph and contempt. The domino feared that he was not only sus-

pected, but recognized. Controlling his laughter, Francesco replied,

"Assaulted and robbed, sir mask! How can you imagine such a thing? a strong fellow like you. I think we know each other, and that you tremble not for your purse, but for another reason."

"What do you mean, villain? I do not know you. Let me go after my own affairs. You have mistaken me for somebody else."

"No, indeed I am not mistaken," exclaimed Francesco, impetuously. "But supposing I were, I would just ask you what business you have with those two masks that you dare to follow them."

"I follow no masks," answered he, with evident trepidation.

"Yes, but you do. You followed them to the Caffè, you followed them to the Campo San Moisè—you were following them just now."

"Well, what business have you to interfere?" said he boldly.

"I could tell you perhaps that I have a right to interfere in your business, as you have interfered in mine, Don Domino."

This expression often applied to priests in a scornful meaning, now acquired a still more cutting significance, hitting at once at the mask and at the priest, and excited in the breast of the *Don Domine* a truly infernal burst of fury. "I ask you again what business you have to follow these masks?"

"And I tell you again," answered the other, trembling with fear and rage, "that you have mistaken me. Let me go after my own affairs."

"Well, I may be mistaken as to the identity of the person, but not so as to the fact. You have followed these masks from place to place, and I demand to know the reason."

"And the reason," answered he proudly, "I do not intend to give. I am at liberty to go where I choose, and follow whom I please."

"But you have dogged the steps of these two persons like a spy; and if you are not clever enough to avoid being discovered, you must pay the penalty of spies who cannot keep themselves concealed. You are a spy, and have been discovered as a spy, and I, as the party offended, proclaim you for a spy."

"You lie! I am not a spy," cried he, with indescribable rage, for, during the dispute, some people had gathered round them. "You are a villain and a highwayman."

"I am neither," cried Francesco, exasperated. "My brow is not concealed—my face is well-known—my name is respected."

He uttered these words with such noble dignity, that all present seemed spell-bound. Never had a nobler man appeared before them. "But *you* are a spy; *your* forehead is concealed, *your* face is covered with a mask to hide its infamy; *your* name is that of one of the dregs of mankind, whatever may be the appearance you present to the world without your mask."

The sympathy of all present was already in favour of Francesco, from the impression produced by his noble appearance and manly beauty—when the voice of a young man of gentlemanly address was heard to exclaim, "I know this gentleman; he is a man of honour and respectability. On my word of honour I protest it."

"And this man," said Francesco, as if continuing his sentence, "has dared to follow and persecute, all the evening, two ladies in masks,

worthy of all esteem and veneration, who have masked, not for pleasure, but from lofty motives—ladies of true nobility of soul. I observed the fellow, and watched him acting as a spy upon them and me. I would not wish to press the matter against him, if he has committed such imprudence from youthful folly, though he ought to distinguish the sort of persons to be followed ; but I insist upon knowing what his intentions were, for his conduct is that of a real spy.”

“ Yes, the gentleman is quite right,” said the former speaker, “ the mask ought to give the satisfaction demanded, and declare the reason for this ungentlemanly persecution of two ladies. I propose that he uncover his face and declare his name, at least, to one of us privately, that the declaration may be accepted as truth.”

“ Yes,” exclaimed another of the bystanders, whose numbers were continually increasing, “ that’s what he must do,—and put an end to it !”

All the rest agreed to the proposition ; but the domino was little inclined to accede to it, and exclaimed,

“ I shall not !”

"Then, you are an infamous spy, and, as such, I shall treat you," cried Francesco, striking him a blow on the face.

"Well done, well done!" cried the bystanders.

"Now," said Francesco, "if you are not a villanous spy, you will make yourself known."

The argument was weighty enough for every one present, except the domino. To describe his state would be impossible. The reader can imagine better than we can represent it. Had he followed his inclination, he would have planted a weapon in Francesco's breast; but he had been thoughtless enough to come unprovided with arms of any kind, never thinking that by following the two masks he risked finding himself in his actual position. Without arms it was impossible to revenge himself upon his assailant; his only plan, then, was to take refuge in flight. Yes, he was compelled to flee—for it would be more possible for the mountains to remove, for the rivers to flow upwards to their source, or for the sun to cover the earth with darkness instead of light, than that he, a priest, should expose his priestly face and anointed head, with its

aureole of clerical tonsure. Exhibit himself as a priest. Impossible! Despised, hissed, insulted he would certainly be, perhaps even kicked from the spot by the populace—the day after, the scorn and derision of the city and the whole country. The fear, too, presented itself to him of severe punishment, imposed by the ecclesiastical authorities, perhaps confinement for years in the island of St. Clement, near Venice, where they incarcerate for years of penance the priests who perpetrate flagrant violations of the rules of decency. He had no choice then, but to retire, without saying another word, amidst hisses, and groans, and expressions of contempt and scorn. Francesco, pressing the hand of the young man who had so bravely taken his part, passed through the crowd, which respectfully made way for him to pass. The scene occupied but a very short time, and, happily, no police appeared near the spot during the whole of the occurrence.

The rage of Don Giuseppe was greatly mitigated by the certainty of the approaching ruin to his enemy. He was aware that it was proposed to arrest him the day following, and the

consequences he well knew. Imprisonment for years—perhaps for life—and at Spielberg.—
Poor fool!

So terminated this memorable masquerade.

CHAPTER XVI.

PATRIOTS, NOT MALEFACTORS, ALWAYS FIND
FRIENDS TO AID THEIR FLIGHT.

FRANCESCO had no time to lose. He had much to accomplish in a few hours. It was a most difficult undertaking to escape without being discovered by the police. The lagune has only two passages, where are stationed the Custom-house officers and the police—the one to intercept contraband goods, the other to examine passports. With the exception of these two narrow passes the vast lagunes are enclosed either by fences or marshes, and escape, difficult by day, is impossible at night. By day, amidst the confusion caused by passengers, it may be possible to elude the vigilance of the police: but at night the passage is closed by bars, and the isolated gondola is compelled to stop that the

gondoliers may summon the guard, who scrupulously make their inspection, and then raise the bar to afford a passage. All this was, therefore, impossible for Francesco to attempt. His flight would at once have been intercepted. After reflecting for a short time, a happy idea presented itself to him.

The contrabandists are bold, brave men. Their barks, called vipers, are extremely light. They fly along the surface of the water, and require a depth of not more than a few inches. It is impossible for the utmost vigilance of the Custom-house officials, when the tide is high, to prevent their passing by means of small creeks or narrow inlets, impassable for any boat save this small, light-built craft. The officers on duty may detect them, but they know it is useless to give them chase—they appear and vanish in an instant. Do the officers and smugglers by chance come to blows, the free-traders are strong and daring, and the officials have always the worst of it, and come off with broken heads and bones, or sharper wounds. The chief of the contrabandists is of civil condition, and well received in society. No odium is attached to

his profession, and, in spite of it, he is esteemed a man of honesty and honour. Indeed public opinion is rather in his favour than otherwise. One strange characteristic of the Austrian rule, which is a monstrous system of rapacity, is its gentleness towards those who deceive the Government, and boldly appropriate part of its revenue. Contrabandists are never arrested on simple suspicion, nor even on the certainty of their calling. It is only when they are taken in the act of violating the law, with the goods upon them, that they are punished, and even then with no great severity. The system of the Austrian administration is theft. The Government robs the people, the ministers rob Government, subalterns rob ministers. Sometimes judicial investigations are instituted to examine into these robberies, but the evil is so wide-spread that the Government desists in despair. It seems as if there were an innate modesty in the Austrian law, that, conscious of its own rapacity, it is disposed to pardon those who are clever enough to elude its extortions ; a curious phenomenon, but a fact. Now, a contraband chief may be beloved and esteemed in society, because

the oppressed people love those who, by their natural energy, delude and rob the legal extortioners. The Austrian Government, thus cheated, seems to say, "We eat our fill, and if a dog succeeds in robbing us of a bone, we take the loss patiently, and leave him to enjoy it." These chiefs, adventurous and daring men, are generally warm patriots, and dexterously aid in all political agitations.

Francesco now repaired to one of these chiefs. He knew him, not only by report, but personally, having met him at a feast, in company with a group of high spirited young men. Fortunately he found him at home, though just on the point of leaving the house. "A great favour," said Francesco, as soon as he was conducted by him to a private room, "I am going to ask you."

"What is it?" asked the bearded chief of the contrabandists, with bold look and hawk's eye. "I am disposed to do anything to oblige you."

"You must help me to escape from the clutches of the police. I have been warned that to-morrow morning I was to have been arrested on a political accusation. I should

certainly be lost, because the proofs against me are very strong. You must row me over the lagune to night, and land me on terra firma."

The chief did not answer. For a moment he pressed with his under lip the moustache which covered the upper, his ordinary act when deep in thought. After thinking awhile, he rung the bell, rose, and grasped Francesco's hand, saying; "It is a difficult matter, but it shall be accomplished." A servant appeared, and his master ordered him to call Checco instantly. Checco was a trusty follower who headed the band of ferocious smugglers under his command. In few minutes the bronzed and scarred face of Checco presented itself. "Go directly," said the chief, "and tell Nane and Tita to have their vipers ready at ten o'clock, and three brave men each."

Checco went to execute the command. In an hour the vipers and men were ready. Francesco in brief words thanked the chief, and offered him two hundred francs to pay the men. The chief refused it, saying, that it was not a matter of gain, but a service that he rendered to his country and to a worthy friend whom he loved and esteemed.

Francesco wrote a note and sent to the house where he had resided, saying, that he should be absent for two days, as he was accompanying some friends who were going shooting on the lagune. This he did to put the police on a wrong scent when they went the next day to inquire for him. He wrote also, by express, a letter to the priest of Rivalta, who was still at Venice, to inform him prudently of his forced absence. From foresight he always carried a passport about him, obtained in a foreign state during his travels. In three hours he had completed his arrangements, and by midnight was on board a viper. Silently and rapidly, with their oars muffled to avoid the least sound, they flew across the lake, one viper in advance, to prepare the way in case of meeting any of the police boats. They soon touched the land. Francesco gave a present to each of his brave liberators, and then set forth on the road, at first in a hired carriage, and afterwards by post.

We might fill a long chapter with commonplace of perils encountered, of suspicions awakened on the exhibition of his passport, of details as to

the manner in which, by an appearance of ease and frankness, he deluded the clear sight of the most suspicious ; of disguises ; of concealment in humble abodes ; of hair-breadth escapes from police agents ; but it would too greatly prolong our narrative, and other subjects await our attention. We will therefore only add, that in three days he had bravely surmounted all obstacles, and found himself safe away from the Lombardian confines, and beyond reach of danger in Switzerland. The Austrian police gave strict orders to trace his footsteps, but he was already safe out of the state, and had nothing more to fear from their rapacious talons.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SERPENT, INSTEAD OF SURPRISING THE
EAGLE IN HIS NEST, FINDS THE DOVE AND
INFLECTS ON HER HIS STING.

ON the following evening, the Countess Alfredini and the chaplain were seated at the supper-table. The Count had retired early, being fatigued. He evidently could not last long, for he was now so weak, that he required the assistance of two persons to enable him to walk at all; yet he was labouring under no apparent disease. During supper, the chaplain scarcely spoke. He could not conquer the deep resentment which filled his soul at the recollection of the insult he had received from his enemy on the previous evening. She saw him he thought, and the meeting was sought by her. She spoke.

to him, and her lips did not avoid the touch of his. Of this he himself was a witness ! Fury and hate ! And then the odious lover assaulted him, provoked him mortally, insulted him ! and he ! imbecile, cowardly, timid wretch, was obliged to take all, to suffer all, without uttering a syllable ! Oh, malediction on the wretch ! Imprecations continually issued from his heart. " And this man," thought he, " will ever have dominion over the woman. But his dominion will be short," reflected he ; " he is by this time in prison ; this is his first day of penance ; penance that will last for years, and most likely to the end of his execrable life. And his punishment is my work," said his malignant spirit, exultingly.

Deluded wretch ! He knew not yet what had taken place. Nor did Amalia yet know what was the fate of Francesco ; whether he had succeeded in placing himself in safety, whether he had escaped the hands of the police. How many prayers had she uttered that day !

Thus taciturn, both immersed in their own thoughts, they uttered few words, though seated face to face. He anxiously awaited the triumph.

of announcing to her, with his own lips, the sad news of the imprisonment and infallible ruin of her lover. It was, indeed, a supremely sweet revenge that he expected to taste very soon. The facts having been confided to him as to the supposed discovery of the author of the book—though he knew more about it than persons in general imagined—and to as the arrest which was to take place the following day, he had engaged one of his friends, a priest like himself, to watch, and, as soon as the arrest should be effected, write to him, informing him of it as a piece of news, without mentioning names. He had it in view to excite the aversion of the Countess against the author of the impious work, so as to induce her to desire that he might be punished according to his deserts, and afterwards to inform her who the writer was, as if he had but just made the discovery, and then to exult in her anguish. This scheme of vengeance was truly well matured.

The day passed, and no letter arrived. Supper was finished, still no letter. He was disquieted and agitated. He much feared that some obstacle had arisen to hinder the accom-

plishment of the arrest. Supper was over, and the hour of prayer was approaching, when the letter arrived by the hands of a servant. It was the letter he was so anxiously expecting. He showed no haste to open it, but his heart trembled with vengeful impatience to feast his eyes upon the welcome announcement. At length, asking the customary permission of the lady, with affected carelessness he opened the letter. He read it, and his eyes became confused, his face pallid. At that moment his appearance was truly monstrous. Why did not the Countess observe him then? How many nefarious revelations would have been exposed in that face! But, buried in her own thoughts, she looked not at him. Very different with him. He looked at her! His glance was but momentary, but it seemed truly poisoned and poisoning! At that moment his feeling towards her was one of hate, unmitigated by any portion of love. He knew now the meaning of the mask. He now read his own fate, and her's too, in the book of destiny. His bosom heaved and effervesced with destructive and sanguinary impulse. Once again he glanced at the unheeding

woman. He no longer felt himself simply a man, but more than a man; stronger than a man. He felt himself powerful, great, and cognizant of things both terrestrial and infernal! He seemed to himself an angel, though a fallen one, and, in his pride, he defied the celestial powers. This was not the process of his mind, but of his heart. It was the work of feeling which can operate mighty effects in an instant.—A third glance he cast upon the dreaming woman, in which was combined the love and hate of a demon. The poor Countess experienced a shudder, as of terror, running through her veins and compressing her heart, without being aware that this mysterious sensation was excited by the means of the man seated near her; yet, in truth, it was the influence of that look she experienced. Such effects were produced by the following letter:—

“Most reverend Signore and Friend,

“A misfortune has occurred which will cause a great lamentation to the church. The impious writer of ‘The Unity of the Church of Rome’ has made his escape. He was to have been

arrested this morning, but it is supposed that he received timely warning to that effect. It is not known whither he is gone, but it is most probable that he has found an asylum and protection among his friends. Let us pray to the Most High that he may not long be concealed, and that this destroyer of our most holy Faith may be brought to the punishment which his crime demands. I cannot give you any farther particular at present, but expect soon to be able to furnish you with the name of this infidel. Meanwhile, believe me, with every expression of esteem and friendship,

“ Your most affectionate
“ and devoted servant and friend,
N. N.”

Don Giuseppe's fury having somewhat subsided, without exciting the observation of the Countess, he recommenced his hypocritical arts, and composed a new theatrical representation. Reclining his head upon his hand, he remained a short time as if absorbed in sad and profound thought, uttering repeated and grievous moans, and pretending to hide the tears which involuntarily streamed from his eyes.

“What is the matter, Don Giuseppe?” asked the Countess anxiously, on raising her eyes and seeing him in that state of affliction. “Are you ill?”

He did not answer, but remained apparently buried in his own distracting thoughts.

“Are you ill?” repeated the amiable Countess, approaching him and taking his hand for a moment.

Oh death, and worse than death! That touch renders him a maniac again; again sends fire into his veins! “Are you ill?” once more she asked with increased anxiety.

“Oh, our holy Mother Church,” he at length exclaimed, “is in affliction. Her altars are veiled; her pictures hide their faces; her images sweat blood. Christ is again put to torments and crucified. Oh, misery and woe!” cried he, as if yielding to a paroxysm of grief which almost rent his heart.

“What can be the matter? Holy Mother!” exclaimed the Countess in terror, “what misfortune has happened?”

“Our holy Religion is trodden under foot by the wicked, who vaunt themselves in their im-

piety. Christ is crucified afresh by the wicked, who exult in their infamy!"

"What is the matter, again I ask?" impatiently exclaimed the Countess. "Tell me directly, and keep me no longer in this terrible suspense."

"The enemy," exclaimed he, "has aided the offender of God and his church. The man who attempted with bold front to wage war against the Lord in his Church, should have been rendered incapable of pursuing his hurtful designs. The many souls lost by his arts cried for vengeance against him to God; but at the very moment that he was to be cut off from communication with society as a putrid branch, and confined in a prison for life, he has met with demons, yes, demons," cried the Priest furiously, "to aid him in his escape."

"But of whom are you speaking, in the name of mercy?" asked the Countess trembling.

"I cannot tell you his name; it has not yet been confided to me, but he is a monster," continued the Priest. "I care not who he is; were he my own father, though my heart were bleeding, I should say he was a monster. He is the

author of an infamous book, of the wickedness of which you can form no idea. He is a demon in flesh and blood, who will be the ruin of souls innumerable; and those who had lent a helping hand to aid in his escape must themselves render an account to God, and for them will be reserved a place in the infernal regions not less tormenting than that to which this enemy of God will be consigned,—for they were no less culpable than he.”

“Oh, Don Giuseppe, have pity!” exclaimed she. “Say no more; I feel as if I were dying.”

“Why such pity?” asked he, with a truly satanic sneer. “Why this pity for a condemned soul? Why this pity for the monster who wages war against Christ? For the lost soul who has assisted him in spreading ruin over the earth, by rescuing him from punishment and custody? Why have pity on such infidels?”

“Spare me,” cried she, with frenzied voice. “Spare me!” and she prostrated herself before him in her terror of conscience. “Have mercy, in heaven’s name. The man who is saved is Francesco, and it is I who have saved him!” and she fell on the floor senseless. The monster

regarded her for some moments with triumph ; with the voluptuous enjoyment, not of love, but of revenge. He took another look, then went to the bell and rung it violently. The servants appeared. The Countess's women were summoned. She was restored to consciousness by the use of simple remedies, and the priest retired to his apartment to follow out his designs. The night passed with him as it must naturally do. Francesco saved by the Countess's means. The Count near his end. After his death, Amalia sure to be *his*. Behold the result of all his atrocities ! But he still lived ! Francesco and Amalia both lived—and he would not abandon the hope of vengeance !

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHI MORE IL MONDO LASSA, CHI VIVE SE
LA PASSA.

Venetian Proverb.

PEOPLE DIE, AND SURVIVORS CONSOLE THEM-
SELVES.

THREE months had elapsed since the occurrence of the scene described in the last chapter. The aspect of affairs at Alfredini House was changed. The Countess was a widow. As might have been expected, the whole of the Count's property did not go to the Countess, but only a fourth part of it. This, however, was a considerable addition to the wealth of the Fossombroni family. The remainder was left to the Count's nearest relations, with the exception of some large sums that were bequeathed to churches

—and much was appropriated to the good of his soul. To Don Giuseppe fell the two hundred thalers for life, as long as he chose to retain the office of chaplain, residing in the house or not, and a legacy of three thousand thalers—a generous provision in accordance with Italian customs, so that after all he had gained much in a pecuniary point of view. But in all that affected his peace of mind he had been anything but a gainer. He felt the effects of his wicked actions fall heavy upon his own head, while they remained without effect against others. Amalia was again free, but no longer submissive to him as formerly. Francesco far away, it is true, from his beloved country, but safe, and well provided with means by his own family, and, farther, never mentioned by the true sons of Italy, except with respect and honour. For himself, he had passed the best years for the activity of life, without having made the least progress in reputation for learning, or in position. He no longer resided at Alfredini House, because the relations of the Countess disliked him, and their counsels, added to those of the Signora degli Adorni, had induced Amalia

to dismiss him. She discharged him, however, in a friendly manner, which did not preclude him from visiting her ; and seeing that he could hope for nothing better, he was obliged to content himself with that. From time to time he did visit her, and though his visits were not very welcome to her, yet, her suspicions being very vague, she did not receive them ill. The scene, however, which had occurred the evening following the flight of Francesco, had determined her to be upon her guard with him, and to keep him at a distance. So stood affairs, when new events arose to awaken agitation afresh.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEWS THAT MOVES HUSBANDS AND MAIDENS TO
JOY, WIVES AND OLD MAIDS TO TEARS, AND
AFFORDS A PRETEXT FOR RENEWED PER-
FIDY.

At this juncture, Italy was elated with hope. The eye of the people turned towards the Pontiff. Though a Pope, he had not yet ceased to be a man, nor believed it incompatible with his pontifical dignity to aid in reform, to free the people, and encourage liberal institutions; and he was perhaps sincere in his proceedings. He did not yet know that the Pontificate is essentially adverse to all salutary institutions and true freedom, nor did the people yet know how illusory was the hope that liberty could ever emanate from Rome. Much, however, had been

really effected by the Pope, and much more was expected.

It was at the turn of July in the year '47. Among other religious reforms which were expected as sure, it was said the celibacy of the priests was to cease, and the idea caused general satisfaction. It pleased the men, because, in truth, the free intercourse of these professional celibates with their wives is far from agreeable to them; and it pleased young girls, because it augmented the probabilities of their settling well. It was disbelieved by the Jesuitesses or middle-aged devotees, and by the old priests. The first, because it would impair in the attachment of their spiritual fathers, brothers or friends; by the last it was because not themselves profiting by such a law, they would only lose by it. Thus, this important change in the ecclesiastical discipline would take place, they believed by the people for a time.

Don Giuseppe never believed it. With his profound reflection, he saw that the *prestige* of Rome depended upon the celibacy of her priests. These, having no domestic ties, nourish not gentle and enlarged sentiments; they become

Sectarians, and support their own party with the most violent ardour.

Thus, the great machine of Rome deriving its strongest support from the celibacy of the priests, Don Giuseppe clearly saw that it was necessary for its own subsistence that this law should be maintained, and hence, in reality, he yielded no credence to the reports circulated respecting it. But he was willing to avail himself of any means for the attainment of his infamous ends, and he soon saw the use he might make of this rumour already accepted by the public. He founded upon it the boldest scheme he had ever planned. That to which he could never before bring his mind, he now determined upon deliberately, and, should blood and death be the result, he cared not.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FEVER OF THE HEART MANIFESTS ITSELF
IN TERRIBLE FITS OF MANIA AND VIOLENCE.

DON GIUSEPPE hurried off to the house of the widowed Countess. It was early in the morning, an hour when she was certain to be disengaged. She was alone in her room, absorbed in deep thought regarding him towards whom she might now turn her mind without fear of sin. She thought of her Francesco with all the tenderness of an early affection, infinitely strengthened by past misfortune and secret grief. She now rejoiced in the consciousness of duty never violated even in thought while she was a wife. No longer bound by conjugal ties, she gave herself up to sweet dreams connected with him. The thought of the book, which was ever present

to her mind, as well as the fact of having borne the name of another, prevented her from hoping ever to become his bride, but did not hinder her from thinking of him with a constant and unbounded affection. Still, without hoping to unite her lot with his, she was happy in loving him, and in being able to do so without remorse. Immersed in such thoughts, little welcome to her was Don Giuseppe's visit, which compelled her thoughts to take an analogous direction. The priest saluted her, advancing towards her. She invited him to a seat near her, and he, with a free and graceful air, seated himself.

She was, indeed, beautiful to his eyes at that moment. In the freshness of the morning the room seemed filled with the odours of beauty, distilling purity around. To exclude the summer heat, the blinds were drawn down, and the softened light seemed to give an air of sanctity to the spot. The simple and innocent elegance of the goddess of the place was everywhere visible. Choice and sweetly-perfumed flowers, arranged in costly gold and silver vases, carpets of velvet, and softly-stuffed seats, all tended to

incite the soul to an ineffable tenderness, which was corrupted in his breast. Her morning attire was suited with wondrous elegance to her light and graceful form. The thick masses of her rich hair were gathered into simple bands of graceful negligence, her throat and neck were exposed to the eye of her importunate guest. Her hands, formed by nature as if for touching the chords of the harp, and her exquisitely-rounded arms, moulded like those of the sculptured Hebe, pouring forth nectar to the Olympian Gods, dazzled his eye by their splendid whiteness. Her smile, not friendly, but courteous, seemed to invite to sweet converse. Giddiness seized him, his heart bounded in his breast with impetuous fury. He would have given worlds for one embrace. What was the world to him without her? Could she never be his? Not from love, he well knew, but passion blinded him. He hoped, fool that he was! to overcome her by inadvertence, surprised into delirium. Within himself he indulged the villanous faith that the supreme moment had arrived, and that she was about to become his, to be his slave for ever! Firm in this faith

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he doubted not to see the realization of his schemes.

"I have come, your ladyship," said he, with the most winning modulation of voice that could possibly proceed from his lips, "to pay you a visit very early this morning, that I might find you alone, and indulge in a quiet conversation."

Her womanly quickness saw something displeasing in this preface, but unwilling to show the impression it made upon her, she replied—

"I am glad you are come early, Don Giuseppe. It is always a pleasure to me to talk about my poor husband."

This was a delicate hint, that no other topic, religious or secular, would be acceptable to her, and that he had now lost all influence with her.

"It is well with the Count now," said he, with hypocritical tone, "and I think we had better avoid so melancholy a subject."

This was a sarcastic insinuation. He well knew, that virtuous and noble as were her sentiments, the Marchioness Amalia Fossombroni could not, after the lapse of months, grieve much for her husband Count Alfredini.

“ I do not shed hypocritical tears of desperation for the loss of my husband, because I am not accustomed to feign what I do not feel,” said she, with an air of noble pride. “ Still, I loved the good Count more perhaps than any one would believe.”

“ Do let us quit this sad subject, Countess,” he dexterously replied, “ and talk if you please about our good Pontiff.”

“ With all my heart,” said she, with dilated eye.

At that time, the Pope was the idol of the Italians. The women, with enthusiastic fancy, and transports of admiration, exalted him to a point little short of adoration. Italian enthusiasm was not contented with regarding him as a liberal man, and a hero in toga, but would also look upon him as a hero of the sword. Had they not invested him with the sublime attributes of the warrior, he would not have been sufficiently a hero. It was remembered by some one, no matter whom, that he wore, when a boy, the livery of Napoleon's body guard, if we mistake not, for some months, and

that was sufficient to induce them to paint him clad as a soldier as well as priest.

"He has certainly worked great good in his states," said Don Giuseppe, who, in reality, from his consideration of men and things, saw that there was nothing really extraordinary in the man.

"Oh, he is sent of God," exclaimed the Countess with enthusiastic vivacity. "He is the restorer of our religion, which will be beloved through his means, even by those who loved it not before."

A smile of bitter sarcasm curled the lip of the priest.

"He will be the regenerator of Italy and the world," continued she, "heretics will be converted to our holy religion, and through him heresy will vanish from the earth. He is indeed sent of God."

"Oh, yes," answered he artfully, "it really appears that he nourishes the holy design of embracing Christianity in one single church. It is quite believed that he will remove the obligation of celibacy from the priests."

"How can that be?" asked she in surprise.

"Is it possible? How can the priests be withdrawn from the service of God, to indulge in the joys of earth? I cannot believe it."

As a devoted Roman Catholic, she could not disunite the idea of celibacy from that of the priesthood.

"No, my lady," said the hypocrite, with affected dignity, "it is not contrary to the welfare of the church that this change should take place. If the Pope permits it, it will be as the effect of divine inspiration."

"But it is most likely only a report, and altogether devoid of foundation," replied the Countess, unable to reconcile herself to the idea of priests marrying. "I could not believe such a thing."

"Well, I think it is very likely to be true," said he, "because celibacy is merely a point of discipline established by a Pope, with a view to expediency, and may by a Pope be abolished for expediency."

"And do you think, Don Giuseppe," asked she innocently, "that it would be expedient?"

"I will not give an opinion upon it," said he, cautiously, "but I have before my eyes many

examples of evil occasioned by this law of celibacy."

"Certainly," answered she, obstinately maintaining her opinion, "there is no good that man may not turn to evil, but it does not cease to be good on that account."

"And do you think it then so great a good?" asked the priest, with an eye of fire. The Countess trembled at that look, cast down her eyes, and blushed. He continued,

"I knew a man who adored a woman with the holiest and loftiest affection. He was generous, handsome, and possessed of noble and enlightened sentiments. He loved this woman with the enthusiasm of a poet, with the constancy of a brave man, with the honour of a gentleman. She was dearer to him than the light of the sun, or the pupil of his eye. He loved her better than his life, better than his own soul. He loved her silently in the secret depths of his heart. For her he endured years and years of mortal anguish, though he never spoke of his love. For her he renounced the splendid prospects that opened to him, and all his hopes and honours, but he held his peace. He would

willingly have lived on bread and water, might he but have feasted his eyes on that beloved face. For her he would have journeyed to the farthest extremities of the earth, he would have endured the snows of the north, he would have crossed the burning sands of the south. For her he would have braved the serpent's fang, faced unarmed the fiercest lion of the forest; for her he would have leaped the most fearful abyss. Yes, I knew a man, who, with love so unbounded, loved a woman, and loved her secretly."

"Well," returned the Countess, "if the woman were free, surely such a love would not go unreturned. Whatever the obstacles, he would no doubt marry her," added she pityingly, scarcely knowing what he might intend to convey, but still moved with compassion towards the mysterious individual who was capable of loving so ardently.

"This man," said he, solemnly fixing his eye wildly upon her, "this man was a priest!"

A sudden light illuminated the mind of the Countess. She remembered the past; at a stroke the dust was removed from her eyes; she read the very soul of her persecutor, and all

the infamies of his past life manifested themselves to her as in a mirror. She determined to hear no more. Unwilling, however, to let it appear that she understood him, with great presence of mind, notwithstanding that she trembled with fear and horror, she replied, immediately, assuming a tone of indifference,

“ Oh, well, if priests are allowed to have wives he can marry her. You will excuse me now, Don Giuseppe, I have business that requires my attention.” She rose with composed dignity, intending to leave him immediately ; but having in her mind the resolve to write him a note during the day to say that she dispensed with his visits for the future. Seeing her rise to depart, and fearing to lose his last opportunity, he determined upon making a desperate effort. Anger and desperation had rendered him a maniac. He started to his feet, and with wildly glancing eye, pale face, and convulsed lips, rushed towards her. She had scarcely taken two steps, when he seized her hand, and almost suffocated with desperation and passion, cried,

“ Stop, stop, fatal woman ! Listen to the cry of the man who adores you ; the cry that

for years and years he has stifled in his heart, lacerating it asunder. Listen to the cry of the man who for you silenced his conscience that he might love freely without fear of God or man. I, I know what it is to love, and to love without hope—to love, and receive only hatred in return—to love, and be a priest! Listen, cruel woman,” cried he with a voice half frenzied, half tearful, “listen for once to the cry of a man, who through long years of misery has loved you and kept silence. I have looked on you with burning eyes—yet never uttered a word of love. I have been near you all day, and far into the night in the familiarity of domestic life; near you at table, near you in company, near you at play, near you in your walks, near you at your devotions, idolizing you with passionate fury—yet never daring to touch your hand or utter a word of love. Listen, oh! listen only for once to my despairing cry—and then let me die, and I shall die content.”

Thus raved the maniac, holding her hand tightly, and obliging her to remain standing by him. She tried unsuccessfully to free herself from his grasp, and at first was too overwhelmed with fright and horror to find words to interrupt

him. Recovering herself a little, she was unwilling to cry out from fear of exposure, and hoping to be able quickly to escape from him, or get rid of him without arousing the house. At length, she summoned strength, and, without any appearance of anger or pride, but in tones of pity and entreaty, she said,

“ Oh ! Don Giuseppe, for the love of heaven, for your own good and for my honour, I entreat of you to let me go. Do not oblige me to call for assistance.”

“ Let you go now, never to see you again ! Foolish woman ! No, I will hold you here until you have heard all that I have to say. Call for assistance. I care not if all the world are witnesses ; my despair will help me to invent stories about your lover, whom you have saved, so that you will be despised for life. If you will be quiet and listen to me, I will do you no violence. I will leave you alone, and will only speak. Now cry for help or be still, just as you please.”

Thus spoke the furious priest, his flaming eye fixed full upon her, and holding her tightly by the arm that she might not escape.

" Oh ! I beg of you by the love of God, by the life of your mother, by all that you hold dearest in the world, calm yourself, Don Giuseppe, and leave me," said the trembling woman in suffocating tones.

" By the love of God ! I know him not. I have denied him since I have known you ! By the life of my mother ! her life on my account is a burden to her, since I have known you, cruel woman ! By that which I hold dearest in the world ! You are what I hold dearest. In you is concentrated my whole being. Without you, life is desolation and horror, worse than death. Without you, paradise would be hell to me, and with you, hell to all eternity would be paradise. Leave you now, and with the conviction that I am leaving you for ever ! Silly woman ! No, not until I have tried whether prayers, and entreaties, and threats will move and soften your cruel heart. Oh ! by my prayers can I not tempt you to cast upon me one pitying look ? I prostrate myself at your feet," said he, doing so, and clasping her knees so rapidly, that it was in vain she tried to escape.

"I am ready to kiss your feet," he continued, "to kiss the earth you stand upon. Hours and days will I kneel to adore you; hours and days will I continue to utter groans and supplications, and entreat your pity. Only let me speak and tell you what I have suffered, how I have wept, what deadly agonizing torments I have endured for years without ever receiving one smile of sympathy, one look of compassion."

"Oh! let me go, let me go! or I will cry for help. Let me go," said poor Amalia, in supplicating tones.

"No, I will not let you go; you shall listen to me."

"Help," cried she, but had hardly uttered the sound, when the delirious wretch, with a bound like that of a wild beast, sprang to his feet, seized her with one hand, with the other stopped her mouth with a handkerchief to stifle her cries, and grasping her delicate form with his powerful arm, held her so, that she could neither move nor utter a sound. With a voice trembling and broken by rage and grief, he exclaimed,

“ You are powerless now, and I will speak. I care for no one. I am ready to submit to my fate, and look forward to my ruin with complete indifference. The servants may come your friends may come, the world may come—but I will never release my prey. Yes, I love you as much as man can love. I love you with the love of despair—of love inflamed by the crimes and anguish of years. Nothing I fear, everything I defy ; but I will speak. You must be mine. I have sworn it in the face of heaven, and before the divinity of hell ; mine you shall be. My will is tremendous and irresistible, and mine I will compel you to be. I feel myself powerful enough to make everything bow to me : to make you mine, I feel I can oppose heaven and earth ;—shall I not then overcome your haughtiness, and conquer you ? I feel myself stronger than God.”

Thus raved he impiously, grinding his teeth, while a pallor, which seemed not human, but the lividity of the regions of darkness, rendered his aspect most terrible. His wretched victim exerted herself to the utmost to get free, but all in vain. A chair was overturned in the conflict.

The noise thus produced startled him for a moment, and he relaxed his hold of the Countess, who had no longer strength to attempt to call for help ; but she made an effort to escape a few steps and seize the bell-rope.

“ Stop,” cried he, exhausted, “ see, I am far enough from you,” and he sprung to the other side of the room. “ If you see me stir you will have time to ring, to cry out. Stop, now you are safe ; stop, and I will go.” His words arrested her hand, and she hesitated to ring, though she was ready to do so. “ See, I prostrate myself again with my face to the earth ; see, I weep, I weep, like a child,” and he raised his face streaming with tears. “ See, I pray like a miserable wretched being prays to God—listen !—Oh, my heart will break !” and he placed his hand on his breast as if he suffered mortal anguish. “ I feel a void in my heart deep as the sea, sad as the desolation of the desert.” He could say no more, but uttered repressed heart-rending sobs. Man perhaps had never before wept so bitterly. Amalia’s hand was still upon the bell-rope, for she seemed to have lost the power of moving it. Appa-

rently she was quite petrified by fear. Could she have summoned assistance she would have done so : but her hand refused to move ; and he, repressing, but not overcoming his sobs, continued—" Oh, yes, cruel woman ! if you have any bowels of compassion you must be moved by the cry of a despairing heart. I feel within me torments so atrocious, that if you could see but the hundredth part of them, you would throw yourself into my arms from pity. Pity ! pity !" continued he, softening his voice to tones of supplication the most intense and affectionate, composing his face and relaxing the muscles, until now horribly contracted from intensity of grief. " Have pity ! pity ! upon the poor creature before you ! his state is truly wretched ! I feel a love for you melting my very entrails with an unutterable abandonment of affection. Pity, for the miserable being who loves you as never man loved before ; who loves both with the ferocity of the tiger and the gentleness of the lamb ; who loves as angels love, and loves as demons love. Have pity on the man who, proud and haughty with other men—before you submits to be a slave, an insect, a worm. You may kill

your slave, but oh ! spare his life by one glance of pity. You may trample on the worm or crush the insect—but if your pride induces you to spare its life, oh, at least regard it not with loathing and disgust. That is all the miserable wretch before you asks.”

The poor Countess involuntarily felt herself moved to compassion, and a tear descended upon her cheek, but her hand was still extended to ring the bell.

“Ah, you shed a tear ! indeed you have reason, my angel ! If you could only see what I feel within me, you would shed another and another—you would shed rivers of tears. But you do not see it, and no living soul can imagine the immensity of the grief I feel. Now, command me,—you are the arbiter of my life, of my destiny, of my soul. You may make of me a saint, a hero, or a devil just as you will. But if all that I say is useless, I will sell my soul to hell, I will become famous for my wickedness. I will hate mankind, I will feast upon evil, I will live and luxuriate in the sufferings of others, and the tears of others shall be my mirth and enjoyment.

I repeat, it depends upon yourself to make me an angel or a demon."

"Enough," cried the Countess, at length finding breath to speak. "I have listened too long to your horrible ravings. Don Giuseppe, I will hear no more. Leave me directly. I forgive you, and will never expose you. I pardon this affront, and all the evil that you did me in times gone by; only leave me this instant, and never attempt to see me again."

"The evil that I did you! what was the evil that I did you, weak, despicable woman! in comparison with the harm that you have done me, the great and powerful man?"

His face assumed an aspect more ferocious than ever, and he raised himself erect and moved suddenly towards her. She, imagining that he was about to renew his violence, with convulsive effort pulled the bell-rope: but the cord, from the sudden violence of the movement, broke, and the bell, unshaken, gave out no sound. He rushed upon his victim, as a hyena upon his prey. Blinded by rage, he seized her again, again closed her mouth violently with the handkerchief, and then listened

a moment to see whether the vibration of the wire had been heard: but no one came, and he felt himself secure. The poor Countess was now completely in the power of the madman; she saw no hope, save in God. Having assured himself he had no interruption to fear, he burst into a laugh of mockery and triumph.

“Now you will be forced to listen to me, cruel woman! Now you are really in my power!” and all the malice of his heart appeared in his face at that moment. “Now it is your turn to tremble. You may invoke the aid of your Francesco,—he is far off, and cannot hear you; but I am near, and master over you. Your Francesco is away, and cannot defend you; I am at hand, and you cannot escape me. But I am merciful; your wishes shall be realized. I will give you up to your Francesco:—but your Francesco shall spurn you as a vile thing, abandoned by others.”

Incredible were the exertions she made to escape from his hands. In their struggle chairs were overturned and tables displaced. The handkerchief was for a moment withdrawn from her face; that instant sufficed for her to

utter a cry of desperation and anguish scarcely human, which penetrated to the distant apartments. The wretched man had dexterously locked the principal door on entering, but not ten seconds elapsed from the utterance of that terrible shriek, when the door communicating with the Countess's apartment was abruptly opened, and the faithful waiting-woman entered, in obedience to that cry of distress. She had heard the noise of the moving of the furniture without paying much attention to the matter ; but hearing the cry she was alarmed, though she had no idea whence it proceeded—but her first thought was to run to her mistress's room. On entering and beholding the frightful scene, she screamed violently, and the priest, in despair, flung the Countess from him with so much force that she fell to the ground. He seized his hat, unlocked the door, and rushed down the stairs, after having cast a glance of indescribable hate upon the unhappy woman, whom Providence had thus rescued from further outrage.

A minute later, and a man might be seen walking through the streets of Venice clad in

priestly robe and tri-cornered hat, of erect, stately, and serious aspect, passing onwards with dignified step. Passers-by felt moved with respect towards this worthy member of the sacerdotal ranks, and regarded him with deep veneration as a holy, pious man. Could they but have looked into his soul, they would there have beheld a sight enough to make them shudder with affright, and his face would then have seemed that of a demon. Truly he was a monster under the priestly vestments. The priest was Don Giuseppe, who, like the wild animal, returning to his forest after his revolting feast, was wending to his home. Is there only one Don Giuseppe who thus prowls about the Italian cities under the priestly garb?

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TIMID DOVE IN DEADLY TREPIDATION
FINDS A BREAST PULSATING WITH AFFEC-
TION IN WHICH SHE MAY NESTLE.

THE Signora degli Adorni was alone in her room half an hour after the tragical occurrence, when she saw suddenly standing before her the shadow, not the figure, of a woman. Had the apparition appeared to her in the evening, she could hardly have persuaded herself that it was the real person of her sweet friend, but would have been moved by mysterious terrors. As it was, she felt real alarm excited by a real appearance.

“Oh, most blessed Virgin! what is the matter, Amalia? In the name of Heaven, what can have happened?” asked the Signora, anxi-

ously regarding that face pale as death, those eyes immoveably fixed, their usual expression of sweetness and impressionable intelligence exchanged for a vacant stare, which betokened a wandering unconsciousness of intellect. "What is the matter, my dear one, what is the matter?" said she, still more anxiously, running to meet her, closing the door, and leading her to the sofa, upon which Amalia suffered herself to be placed, like an automaton, her frame rigid as that of a statue. The terrible idea crossed the mind of her tender friend that her reason was affected, and she felt she would rather see Amalia dead at her feet than in so terrible a state. "Tell me what is the matter, my darling one," said she, sobbing and rising to call assistance, "will you not tell me, my love?"

The Countess extended her arm to prevent her quitting her side; it was so rigid, it seemed as if it could not belong to a creature of earth. This was the first movement which indicated that she possessed the slightest consciousness. "Tell me what has befallen you?" said her friend, in anguish. "My own love, what is the matter?" Thus saying, she warmed her cold

lips with her kisses, bathed her face with her tears, and tried to soften the heart which seemed turned to stone, with her caresses—and her friend appeared to revive under the influence of her tender embrace. “Say, say, what has happened, my angel?—Speak, for you are killing me with fear.”

How powerful is the appeal of a bosom friend ! Oh, holy friendship, thou art, indeed, the purest emanation of heaven ! Thou art a sweet, a holy sentiment, most welcome to the breast of man ! Thou art an affection which comes direct from God !

What would have become of Amalia without her friend ? Amalia listened to her cry, and her heart experienced unutterable comfort and consolation. A profuse flood of tears followed that dreadful immoveability, which, without the appeal of friendship, might have resulted in death, or, worse still, the irreparable loss of reason. She extended her arms towards her friend, and cast them around her neck, weeping freely. They united their tears, and remained for some minutes locked in each other’s embrace, while the Signora, in the tenderest and sweetest tones,

kept saying, repeatedly, "Weep, my sweet one, weep—it will relieve you ; weep upon the bosom of your tender friend—it will soften your anguish. Pour forth the bitterness of your soul into your friend's ear, divide it with her, share your trouble with her, with your dearest friend."

At these tender appeals, Amalia closely and yet more closely embraced the friend [of her heart, and, with convulsive effort and voice broken by sobs, exclaimed—

" Oh, you can never, never imagine what has occurred ! Oh, Teresa, I will never leave you again ! I will live with you for ever. Without you I should die with fright."

" Try to quiet yourself, dearest," said the other, with a tone of voice she must surely have derived from the angels when they offer comfort to mortals. " Calm yourself a little ; rest awhile on my bosom, and then you shall talk."

After giving free course to her tears, the wretched Countess felt relieved. Both seated together, hand clasped in hand, the Signora listened to her tale with the unbounded tenderness of a mother or a sister ; and often during this dreadful recital,—

narrated midst convulsions of terror and weeping—did she kiss her face and eyes, and wipe away the tears that the recollection of the atrocious insult called forth. When Amalia had finished, the good Signora, in the enthusiasm of her noble and pious soul, fell on her knees, and, raising her eyes to heaven in a divine ecstasy which rendered her superhumanly beautiful, said—

“I thank Thee, oh God, that it has pleased Thee to deliver this poor lamb from the jaws of the devouring wolf. I thank Thee with the strongest sense of gratitude, and here vow and promise before Thee that I will henceforth guard this innocent lamb with the most anxious vigilance; my eye shall never rest from watching her at night, and my soul shall never repose from protecting her by day from such cruel snares. I promise to defend her as an object dearer to me and more precious than the pupil of my eye, than my own life.”

Having uttered these words, she remained silent a few moments, as if absorbed in thought. Amalia could not pray, her enchanted eye was doring admiration on her friend, who

seemed to her an angelic messenger sent from God. Teresa rose, and, circling her friend's lovely form with her arms, they remained for some time thus closely embracing each other, and only murmuring, "Ever united we will ever remain together." Heaven looked down, and smiled on the sweet spectacle.

Say, dear reader, is man unhappy, can he be unhappy, while he may find comfort like this on earth ?

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SPELL BROKEN, THE ILLUSION VANISHED.

MALICE ALONE REMAINS IN THE FULL VIGOUR OF EVIL.

DURING the progress of this scene between these two angels in human form, to which none but a Raphael—angel among artists—could do justice, a far different one was passing in another spot, enacted by a single individual, so marked by terrible significance, that to describe it would require the pen or the pencil of one of the two greatest who have vividly portrayed the torments of the damned.

Yet we will endeavour to sketch it, to give an idea of the perversity to which that character was subject, so that having seen what were his misdeeds while still young, we may

trace them when matured by age, linked together by a terrible chain of evil combinations.

We find ourselves in Don Giuseppe's room, immediately after his defeat. Having entered it and locked his door, he relapsed not into his ordinary state of violent desperation. Happy he would have felt himself could he have done so! happy for him had his wrath been so violent that he could have dashed his head against the wall; had he been excited to bite his flesh and tear his hair. His appearance was statue-like, his face immoveable, his eyes fixed, giving no signs of consciousness save for one burning spot of intense light in their centre. His lips were bloodless, but rather black than livid. His countenance showed not the least sign of any elasticity of muscle. The flesh that covered it was tightly stretched, as if beneath the skin were only sinews running perpendicularly along the cheeks, and even these become unnaturally rigid. The whole violent energy is confined to his heart, but it is a negative life of repulsion and concentration—all its powers, as it were, are closely enfolded and encased within themselves, all contracted intensely in one focus; hate, wrath,

ferocity, and every wicked passion are quickly generated in his soul, urging him to scatter flames over the world of life, and destroy all living creatures.

He begins to execrate himself and his own existence. He takes a weapon, and, with his convulsed finger, tries its point. He feels an intense longing, an almost irresistible desire to plunge it into his own heart—but his hand obeys not; the vulgar instinct of self-preservation overcomes the soul's desire for death. Perhaps, if poison had been at hand, he would have shown more resolution. He threw down the weapon, and his thoughts again turned to his destructive malice. He would gladly and unrelentingly have destroyed every object, animate and inanimate. He would have sacrificed all created things, and enjoyed the spectacle. This was the thought on which he dwelt, until he seemed to himself to hold in his hand consuming thunderbolts, and rejoiced in his strength. He dared not yet fix his mind upon the scene which had so recently occurred, and in which he was the principal actor. The sensation of despair and hate only he experiences within himself—but he dares

not remember it. At length, by a strong effort of his will, he ventures boldly to face the recollection ; at length, he dwells upon it deliberately, but, instead of detesting, execrating himself, his reflections only induce in him a furious sense of hate and rage against others, and, most of all, against the woman whom, in his perverse state of mind, he regarded as his evil genius, instead of looking upon himself as her cruel tormentor. He, miserable wretch, thought himself her victim, instead of feeling she was his.

His confused mind conceived at a glance the torments of past years—and it seemed to him as if she were fated to be his persecutor. He was conscious of his own sinfulness—and it seemed to him that she had received the commission to incite him to wickedness ;—and he abhorred her. He thought of the pains, and anguish, and delirious sufferings of his inner life—and it seemed to him as she were a being created to excruciate him and surround him with the most deplorable misery and despair, and he really felt a sensation of indignation as though he were the victim, she the sacrificer. In his breast arose a furious desire to rebel against her, so

that, overcoming her, he might amply revenge himself.

It is vengeance alone, not love, that is now the life-breath of his soul. Oh! he is fetterless, he is free once more! The spell is broken, he wakes from his dream, he chases from him the incubus which weighed upon his breast—he inhales a deep breath, the breath of liberty. His love is a dream, the suffering of all the past years is a dream, all is a dream, a phantasy, an enchantment—and all the delirium of love is vanished from his bosom. With relieved breast, with look impiously upturned, he paces the room with agitated steps. He opens the window, and breathes the fresh air—it is another air; he is free! the spell is over, he no longer loves—his heart exults—he no longer adores, he never did adore, his love was an illusion: the illusion has vanished! No! he no longer loves. He laughs with convulsive burst at himself and his folly—at the past folly of his distracted brain. He laughs at his mania, his delirium. It was not a reality; he does not love, and never did. Oh, no! he hates, and hates as a priest only can hate.

His exultations were soon disturbed by a terrible reflection. Oh ! too late he returned to himself and seriously bethought him. His fate was in the hands of a woman who could blast all his future prospects, and who had a witness beside in her own servant, if he attempted to deny her accusations. But even did witnesses not exist, circumstances and appearances were so much against him, that he was well aware he could not exculpate himself, if she accused him. He might be denounced to the clerical court, and most probably the offended woman would take this step. The consequence would probably be his confinement in the house of correction of St. Clement, whence, should he ever be set at liberty, he would still retain the mark on his brow, and would be suspected and shunned by all. His sentence might possibly be remitted, if he feigned sincere repentance ; but this would not save him either from present punishment, or future dishonour. Oh ! what would he now give had this transformation of his heart occurred one day earlier—a few hours earlier ; or could he blot from the book of life's memory the scene which had just occurred at Alfredini

House, in the apartment of the Countess Amalia! But for the past there is no remedy. He soon, however, began to reflect, if there was not a chance of escape. At present, he thought, the knowledge of the affair was confined to two persons; could he destroy these two, all would be safe. At this idea, the demon of homicide assailed and took possession of him. His mind again became disturbed, he revelled in the hope of destroying these two existences. Had the two women been near him at that moment, how gladly would he have satisfied this appetite for destruction, could he have hoped to hide his crime from the eyes of men. But he knew it was impossible. Were he to accomplish the deed, it would soon be discovered, and he would be brought to justice. He gave up the idea of homicide, then, from fear of the scaffold. The Countess had, doubtless, by this time, related the affair to her relatives, and to her friends—perhaps even to the Curia. Woe to him, if she had! Were all kept silent, he might yet make progress in the world, and satisfy his ambition, which had revived with the extinction of his love. And he might, in a few hours, be lost for ever!

Lost as to his career, and lost as to his hope of avenging himself on his enemies—the desire of vengeance now constituting the prime, if not the only element of his miserable existence. Bereft of this hope, life were a blank to him.

Immersed in these reflections, he continued to traverse the room. After half an hour passed in tormenting doubt and uncertainty, he seated himself at the writing table, took a pen, and wrote—

“ Dear Madam,

“ I have decided to withdraw from the world and lead a life of retirement and meditation for the good of my soul. I would entreat of your ladyship to dispense with my services, and accept my resignation of the chaplaincy to the Alfredini family, the occupations I have in view being incompatible with that office.

“ Begging your ladyship to accept my protestations of sincere respect, I am, my lady,

“ Your ladyship’s most devoted,

“ Obedient servant,

“ G. LANZINI.”

This letter was taken to the Countess’s house

by the servant of Don Giuseppe, with instructions not to leave it if her ladyship was from home, but to proceed, in that case, to the residence of the Signora degli Adorni, inquire if the Countess were there, and if she were, deliver the letter and wait for a reply.

After mature consultation, the two friends had concluded to wait and see what was the next act of the priest, in order to accuse or spare him, according to circumstances, much desiring, however, to adopt the second course, not only from magnanimity, but still more from prudence. It was too repugnant to their feelings that the occurrence should become known. In such cases, however innocent a woman may be, it is impossible that her reputation should pass unscathed. The dignity of the Countess forbade her writing to the man who had so grossly offended her ; and, besides, they thought it well he should see that the Signora, whom he knew to be a woman of spirit and energy, would in future be vigilant in protecting her. The Signora, therefore, replied instead of Amalia, and in these terms :

“Reverend Sir,

“Circumstances of the most afflicting nature have induced the Countess Amalia to seek protection and consolation in my house. Here she will remain under the care of a friend who is ready to forfeit her own life, if required, to defend her against anything that may threaten her peace. At present she is suffering acutely, but I doubt not will soon recover, as she has nothing to disturb the serenity of her conscience. At her request I reply to your letter, which has arrived most opportunely to suggest to us the line of conduct to be pursued. Your renunciation of the chaplaincy is accepted. Had the terms of your letter been differently conceived, our plan of action would have been different. We are willing to hope that nothing will occur to frustrate your design of retirement. In the contrary case, you will observe that the Countess will remain for an unlimited time with one who is a faithful and warm friend, and who loves her devotedly.

“I am sure you will appreciate my motive in not writing more explicitly in a letter which may be lost, and I doubt not you will under-

stand this hint, and accept it for your own welfare.

“I am, Rev. Sir, yours, &c.,

“TERESA DEGLI ADORNI.”

This letter was well calculated to augment the hatred of Don Giuseppe for the writer, and he at once placed her in the category of his enemies. She was one whom he most feared, and on whom he least hoped to be able to revenge himself. The contents of the letter were not, however, displeasing to him, as giving him the assurance that no accusation would be laid. He therefore determined to seclude himself and bide his time for vengeance.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RAPID SKETCH OF POLITICAL CONVULSIONS.

THE year 1847 was progressing fruitful in events, and the Italian Revolution was becoming matured. The generous inspirations of sages, of the people, and even of many of the clergy, were already taking effect. The name of a Pope, deemed to be the head of the Italian resuscitation, had excited the enthusiasm of the believing, and aroused religious sentiments even in the adverse breasts. The hope of seeing the revival of the country was associated with religious convictions, either strengthened or newly acquired; and a faith took root in the Italian breast that the gift of freedom would be seen coming from a Pope.

In the meanwhile, Rome, to the admiration of

the world, had been armed for months by a guard of militia. It was soon the case throughout Romagna and Tuscany; and Piedmont quickly followed. Austria was indignant. Naples, and the small Dukes of Central Italy, loudly complained and protested—but without effect. Half Italy had arisen, and the people bore arms legally. Tyranny could not be sufficiently watchful. It is no easy matter to prevent secret meetings or private consultations of patriots, or to stay the powerful irruption of opinion—to repress within the heart of the people a conviction, a sentiment, a want.

Throughout the Peninsula all was agitation, impulse—deep, impatient, passionate longing. The first rush of enthusiasm was vigorous, and the result of profound faith in its success was the burst of a new creation.

In the course of these formidable commotions, Venice had received a powerful impulse from the scientific Congress. This city united itself with the Italian States in a fraternal alliance. She heard the demands of patriots, and was herself possessed by the noble spirit, comprehended the new birth of Italy, and panted for independence.

At this time Milan conceived the idea of waging war against the commercial interests of Germany; of putting a constriction upon the imperial finances by excluding the manufactures of Germany, as the American colonies did when they rose against England; so depriving herself of the luxuries or comforts of life to vindicate her political independence. She also withdrew large sums held by Lombardy against the banks of Vienna and Trieste. Venice, too, responded to the appeal of Milan. The provincial cities, all more or less excited by indignation, entered into a deadly alliance against the foreigner. So completely did the people execrate the Austrians, that they at once dissolved every intimate tie which had existed for years to their dishonour. When the citizen or plebeian encountered the disdainful official, looks were exchanged which spoke the excess of anger and hate.

Sicily was the first to set an example of a powerful, dignified insurrection. The torch of war was kindled—the people rose as one man. This insurrection was rendered memorable by its examples of prowess and heroism. The women exposed themselves with courage truly

masculine to the murderous conflict. The clergy exerted themselves ; monastic communities might be observed fighting valorously. The royal troops were worsted by the people ; the King trembled on his throne—he trembled at the defeat of his army, and at the example which excited the minds of his people—he trembled for himself and his own life, in case of an universal revolt. There was no hope of help : Austria was obliged to act for herself—and the King granted the Constitution. With him, fear had more effect than either hate or anger. The Constitution, the child of fear, was sufficiently comprehensive ; the tyrannic Bourbon having granted it, the less tyrannic Italian Princes conceded it. Italy, in a few days, was Constitutional, except Romagna, who remained behind, it being impossible for the Pope to go too far in liberal innovations without the risk of his own perdition.

Austria meanwhile grew more and more infuriated against Lombardo-Venetia, who grew more and more enthusiastically hopeful. In this province things assumed an aspect of terror daily more and more threatening.

The outburst of a furious revolution was in-

evitable ; but with what auspices would it commence for the Italian cause ? The probable result was the sacrifice of lives innumerable, of ills of every kind, and a burden of oppression ever increasing.

At this juncture the Revolution of France burst out. The country had suddenly become a Republic, and the Orleans dynasty was overthrown. Europe was completely amazed. Nations applauded the daring feat, and followed the example of France. An excitement hitherto unknown seized the people of every country in Europe. In a few short days the whole Continent was in conflagration, and Central Europe became entirely Constitutional. At length hope sprung for Italy from a source whence it was least expected. It came from Germany—from Vienna. The fierce commercial war that Lombardy and Venice had commenced against Austria now produced effects. The working classes of Germany were reduced to a deplorable state of hunger, poverty, and desperation, because Italy no longer consented to carry on her use and wont of consuming German wares. The exhausted treasury was unable to succour the

national bank, which was in a perilous position, and commerce seemed on the verge of a fearful crisis. Thus commenced hatred against the ministry in Germany. Metternich was considered the cause of all the disasters, and upon him were poured forth wrath and menaces. The Universities tried to foment the hatred inspired by hunger. The German, Hungarian, and Italian students had all one object connected with the revival of the nations. With the powerful impulse characteristic of University Students, they lighted the firebrand of revolution in Vienna. Here the flower of Europe, represented by this chosen knot of generous spirits, exchanged the kiss of brotherhood ; through them the nations were united in the close embrace of affection. This was truly a sublime moment, when the people associated in a holy bond of brotherhood. Probably neither Europe nor the world ever presented so admirable a spectacle. It was, perhaps, the only moment for securing the freedom of the nations—this seemed the instant of inspiration.

The dynasty of Hapsburg, which had stood inaccessible to the shocks of ages, now trembled

to its centre. The Princes withdrew, but with struggles and cries of rage; and the furious ministry uttered imprecations against the people. But the dynasty could only save itself and weather the storm by granting concessions. The Emperor, the Archdukes, the Princes, the Ministers in the Imperial Palace, were all threatened with banishment, imprisonment, or death, and obliged to yield. Privileges were promised, and the Constitution was decreed by the Emperor. Metternich had been compelled to fly, to escape popular fury; Italy soon received intelligence of affairs at Vienna; before the decree was issued she fêted the Constitution; she displayed her cockades, and the tricoloured flag was planted; the civic guard was constituted before it had been decreed—all was excitement and irrepressible delirium; the Germans trembled with fear in their strongholds, in the presence of an insurgent people, armed as by magic. Capitulations, one after another, took place. Venice capitulated, after the taking of the Arsenal. The Germans yielded Venice, and soon after they abandoned all the Venetian territory in affright and dismay, scarcely believing the evidence of

their senses. At the same time, Milan, by a desperate insurrection, chased away the abhorred Austrians. In a few days Lombardo-Venetia was free, with the exception of Verona and Mantua, and the fortresses commanding them. Here the Germans shut themselves up, stupefied and trembling—there the grim Radetzky was held in check.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NATIONS IN PROGRESS DRAW FROM THEIR
ERRORS EXPERIENCE FOR THEIR FUTURE
GUIDANCE.

FRANCESCO no sooner learned the state of affairs in the Lombardo-Venetian provinces, and found that to his beloved country he might now consecrate his personal efforts and his counsel, than from Switzerland, where he resided, he flew home with ardour.

Although he did not put much hope in the ultimate success of the revolution, as he saw in it too many conflicting elements to justify a full confidence, he took comfort in the consideration that it was an experiment of the Italians, and that he might lead, in the mysteries of the future, to great results ; that the young in this

collision would be familiarized with great deeds, and lofty thoughts, and energetic will, which might, in days to come, fructify abundantly; that it was a hard school in which minds were elevated to noble purposes, and thus Italy was, perhaps, undergoing preparation for a higher destiny. Moreover, he drew cause for hope from some actual successes of no small importance, which, perhaps, in the course of events, might wonderfully increase the chances of a quick and complete triumph.

So Francesco spent the four months succeeding the revolution, passing from province to province, with the view of aiding his country to the best of his ability—sometimes by action, sometimes by counsel, but always at work.

In the meanwhile, the appearance of affairs in the Venetian provinces had greatly changed for the worse. The Austrians had had time to recover themselves, and to overcome the irregular troops in Italy, and almost all Lombardo-Venetian provinces were again subjugated. In the Venetian territory, Venice and its isles still held out.

We will not pursue the subject. Ours is a

history of individuals, and we have only introduced public affairs, as they serve to illustrate private events. After the disasters in the provinces, Francesco went to Venice, seeing that his services could no longer be of any avail, and glad to escape the persecution of the enemy.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BRAVE CAPTAIN CALCULATES, AND MAKES
THE MOST OF EVERY STRATEGICAL AD-
VANTAGE, BEFORE GIVING BATTLE.

AFTER the fall of the Venetian provinces, Francesco retired to Venice. Here he had the opportunity of observing the transforming effects which love of country possesses, when once powerfully excited in the mind. The sacrifice of money, of ease, of the refinements of life, was truly astonishing. The delicate constitution of the Venetian youth, their versatility of habits and disposition, their frivolity, all seemed to undergo a thorough change. Each individual was urged by the powerful motive of patriotism to put on a new temperament, both moral and

physical. Venice was no longer the voluptuous city of song and sweet sounds, of amours and fêtes, of gaiety and dissipation. Everywhere resounded the battle cry. Everywhere hearts were excited to martial ardour. Whether patrician or plebeian, citizen or tradesman, all had passed from the gay pursuits of pleasure to the sacrifices and noble inspirations of patriots.

The moment arrived when all the Lombardo-Venetian territory was reconquered by Austria, and Milan fell. Venice alone remained as the citadel of liberty. She hoped to obtain succour from the rest of Italy, and calculated upon the success of Hungarian arms to act as a check upon the empire of Austria, even should she recover from the first blow. Until all hope should be utterly extinguished, Venice was resolved to hold out.

Francesco could feel no faith in the regeneration of Italy so long as the people continued to put their trust in the Pope. To him seemed potent the signs of the Pope's defection, if it may be termed defection, when he never was truly liberal at heart, or, at least, he never understood liberty; and it grieved our hero to see

minds disposed to worship a sinful mortal who, boasting infallibility, capriciously supported a principle from which he afterwards, infallible as he was, infamously retracted. So Francesco remained there for a while observing, without giving himself for the time to action.

It was not much longer before the Pope had fallen in public opinion. He was looked upon as a deserter from the sacred banner, and sold body and soul to the oppressor. He withdrew himself from his subjects who idolised him, to place himself under the protection of the fierce haters of the people, and to plot with their enemies. Francesco saw that a new and more hopeful epoch had arisen for Italy, delivered from the fatal shackles of the Ecclesiastical influence, whilst Austria was again threatened with destruction by the victorious Hungarians. So Italian valour awakened again to new hopes.

Such being the state of affairs generally, Francesco again offered his services. The Government of Venice, with all its errors and follies, both of chiefs and subalterns, was at heart patriotic. The head of the Government was a man true to his country, loving it with

perfect devotion of heart, though, to say the truth, not equal to modern diplomatic guiles—a man who ought to have belonged to other times.

Venice was overflowing with armed troops, which, having suffered many disasters, had become dexterous in the trade of war: and then Parliament, at this extraordinary crisis, voted unanimously for resistance to the last extremity. Time proved that their actions belied not their vote. So Francesco presented himself to the chief, to confer with him upon the hopes of Italy, and to offer his own services, only stipulating for some employment of risk and peril, for in no respect did he desire to spare himself. Truly bold and perilous was the work entrusted to him. He had to pass through the enemy's troops disposed in cordon around Venice, and maintaining a vigorous blockade. He had to visit the provincial cities to communicate with the persons indicated in each, for the purpose of establishing secret committees which should bind themselves to hold in readiness the most influential and well-disposed patriots to raise the people on the first appeal of their country. These com-

mittees were quickly organized ; an evident proof how greatly a year of trial and misfortune had matured the judgment of the people, and prepared them for acting boldly and prudently, in order to produce the effects they desired. Though men of every condition and age composed these secret committees, they offered no examples of treachery. So well did Francesco choose those best adapted for his object.

Perhaps, throughout the revolution nothing was better planned, or better carried out, than these secret committees. The private agents of the committees either resided at Venice, and made excursions into the provinces allotted them, or from those provinces contrived to enter Venice as the bearers of the necessary intelligence—an undertaking, it will be seen, of no ordinary danger. However, numbers of generous men were found willing to run every risk for their beloved country, in the hope that at length they might see her free.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS.”

THE work undertaken by Francesco was, as we have said, performed with marvellous dexterity and efficiency. Woe to the Austrians had they at that moment met with a check from the arms of Italy, and had their affairs in Hungary gone on as they seemed likely to do ! That their utter ruin would be the result was evidently their own conviction, for, except in the immediate prospect of destruction, they would never have availed themselves of the aid of that most over-bearing of autocrats, the Emperor of Russia. Italy no longer submitted to hypocritical priestly influence, no longer adored, but detested the Pope, and Romagna was inflamed by a mighty revolution ; therefore, had the Austrians met with disasters

elsewhere, these committees would have inflicted the final blow. Francesco, the daring organiser, went about from one to another of the Venetian cities, sometimes exhibiting himself in his true character, sometimes disguised. He returned to Venice from time to time, to render an account of his progress. His frequent journeys to and fro were observed by many of his countrymen, but they were all friends, who honoured him for his self-devotion ; nor, for a long time, was his security endangered by treachery. But an enemy at length traced him—we know not how. This enemy, without faith either political or religious, wicked at heart no less than in his actions, had suffered mortal affront from Francesco, and to be revenged upon him would have renounced his country, his friends, and himself. This mortal enemy was Don Giuseppe !

Now he—either from natural boldness, or in the hope that any post which might happen to be confided to him, would open up to him the way of accomplishing his evil deeds with greater facility—declared himself a patriot. His natural energy forbade that he should be lukewarm in the cause he undertook. He spoke warmly,

and by his powerful eloquence attracted the attention of the masses. He always voted for the most generous course, nor was he sparing of his own money, but made a show of liberality for his country's good. He was prodigal of his life as if, though a priest, he hesitated not to expose himself to every danger in the service of his country. Truly he was a man to be feared! Without any convictions in favour of the movement, disapproving it, in fact, he was still one of its most powerful agents. What might he not have effected, if with so much boldness and perseverance he had been sincere and honest? But no one doubted either his honesty or his sincerity, except the few who were his victims, and had they ventured to speak against him, they would have been suspected of being either his personal enemies or spies. They therefore left him alone as the best course. Perhaps, moreover, they thought that, though his private life might be deformed by the misdeeds committed against themselves, he might still be sincere in his political professions, as upon the success of the cause his own interests depended. At all events, his influence was very great at Venice.

The two ladies hoped and believed that he had resolved to remain quiet until his former conduct was forgotten. Francesco, at this time, knew very little about him. He had never again seen either Amalia or the Signora degli Adorni, believing that it would be unworthy of him to indulge in thoughts of love, in his country's extremest time of need. He imagined, moreover, that even were his beloved Amalia a widow, and loving him as sincerely as she had ever loved, she would still, being unchanged in her religious prejudices, never be induced to become his; nor could he bring his mind to contemplate marrying her after being the wife of another.

Don Giuseppe was therefore left to act as he pleased, and he was unsuspected by the Government. It is true Francesco once ventured to hint to the Governors that it would be well to avoid reposing too much confidence in the priest, but he saw that he could not depend upon his counsel being followed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING ENTERS THE
FOLD, AND DECEIVES BOTH SHEPHERD AND
DOGS.

DON GIUSEPPE knew that Francesco frequently absented himself from Venice, and he also knew for what object, and how much good he accomplished. This was a piece of information which, in a mind so prolific of evil counsel, could hardly fail to fructify for the destruction of his enemy, and he determined with alacrity to make the most of it.

He presented himself to the committee of safety, which was the life and soul of everything in carrying out all the instructions transmitted throughout the Venetian territory. He himself proposed to leave Venice, to try what he could

do, especially among the clergy. He hoped to persuade the most of the priests of his native country, who were very numerous, to use their influence with the masses, that they might be in readiness for the moment of action. He obtained a promise that his mission should be kept secret, for he was anxious that Francesco should remain in ignorance of it. He then fully believed that he should effect his design of ruining his enemy irretrievably. He knew not yet by what means, but he had faith in the elements with which to this end he had furnished himself. He made two journeys from Venice. He conferred with the chief of the secret local committee of Lunaco, who, in consequence of the credentials he exhibited, believed and confided in him. The priest, however, affixed to his information the condition that his name should not be revealed to the members of the committee, to which condition the chief willingly acquiesced, nor did this reserve excite any suspicion in these troubled times. He returned to Venice twice, and yielded up an account of his labours, for which he received much com-

mentation, and additional confidence was reposed in him.

Thus it was that Don Giuseppe knew the day on which Francesco was to repair to his native place to communicate with the secret committee. The information was given him by one of the members of the committee of safety, with that expansive confidence which seems a peculiarity—and is often a fatal one—of those who are at the head of a revolution, or take any active share in it. They place full trust in the words and protestations of others; for the members of provisional governments are often the most generous and least suspicious of men. They give credence to the loudest talkers, and greatest boasters; they believe all they hear, and often confide in the most dangerous enemies of their country—in spies, even if their words be those of patriots. One of the committee, well acquainted with all the mysteries of the secret missions and operations, thus, with unreflecting candour, apprized Don Giuseppe of Francesco's departure and purpose. The information afforded the priest no concern apparently, but shortly after,

he requested that on the day following he might be furnished with instructions, and the means for continuing his operations. He received them, and immediately commenced his arts.

Having escaped the usual dangers in leaving Venice, he presented himself, unobserved, to the Austrian authorities at Treviso, offering to make some extraordinary revelations. He obtained a hearing ; gave proof of having always been well affected to the Austrian domination, declared that he professed otherwise at Venice only to serve the Austrians, in order to obtain valuable information, with which he was prepared to furnish them. We know not what reception the Austrians may give to spies generally ; but even they are human beings, and however friendly an appearance they may assume, of necessity their hearts must revolt against them. Such was doubtless the case in this instance, but the revelations of the wicked priest were heard with the utmost complacency, and demonstrations of deep respect were shown to the Judas. Judas was an apostle, and the priestly system of Rome founded by men boasting their apostolic descent,

is marvellously well adapted to form followers, not a few of the great school of Judas! The priest expressed his desire to pass freely to and fro between the towns occupied by the Austrians and Venice, that he might exert himself to serve them. For this he was thanked, and furnished with a pass to free him through every place, and a large sum of money was offered, for Don Giuseppes are not met with every day, and he was indeed a prize. Having accomplished so much, he considered the plan of saving his own reputation. He knew that a messenger from Venice was to pass through Treviso on that day, with a secret commission to the committee of Lunaco. He appointed to meet him at the inn in Treviso, where he was expected. They met, and conversed upon the affairs of the country. The messenger was the bearer of fresh commissions from Venice for Don Giuseppe. They parted, and shortly after the messenger was arrested, and the priest appeared to flee away in alarm, taking with him but a small portion of his baggage, leaving the rest behind him at the inn. The proprietors of the inn were secret patriots, and they were good

witnesses that the priest had spoken with the messenger, had manifested the greatest grief at his arrest, and that, seeing his own liberty in peril, he had taken flight.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CAGE IS SHUT, BUT THE BIRD IS FLOWN.

It is one of the coldest days of January ; the wind whistles keenly ; the waters are covered with ice ; the roads are slippery, encrusted with snow like glass ; the sky is serene, but seems as if its splendours had lost all their vivifying force, and retained only their magnificent light, insufficient to moderate the rigour of the air. The birds, unable to find seeds or food of any kind, utter a plaintive moan. The trees having lost their leafy decoration, exhibit dry forms like vegetable skeletons. But rare specimens of living beings present themselves to the sight ; benumbed with cold, they quickly retire to their dwellings, whether men or brutes.

The road is steep, but broad and tortuous, to render it less inconvenient for traffic. Gigantic and sterile mountains surround the desolate scene. A small inn stands by the road-side, kept by a poor countryman, where the thirsty waggoner stops a moment to take the refreshment of a cup of wine, and give his horses a little provender standing in the road. In this inn a chosen group has been staying for some hours. It consists of a company of *sbirri*,* and a priest disguised in poor garments, the former being ignorant of the calling of the latter. The priest looks out of the window with sparkling eye and fixed gaze, and never relaxes his anxious watch. It seems as if the masses of ice lying on the sides of the road exercise an irresistible attraction upon his eye, and he looks with the eagerness with which a condemned spirit would look upon a fountain of pure water springing near him, which he could never succeed in reaching. The noise of an approaching carriage is heard. The hood is raised and the carriage

* The *Sbirri* are a sort of armed police, a cross between the soldier and the police agent, but of a very low order—lower than the gendarme. 7

is open in front, and drawn by a single horse. It approaches with all the speed possible on the steep, ice-covered road. The carriage passes.

"That is it!" exclaims the priest to one of the men who stands near him. They both look out without being observed. The sbirro notes the traveller well, although his head is enveloped by a hood. He is alone in the carriage, which is driven by a hired driver. His beard is perfectly black, and his eye so sparkling, that it seems almost capable of thawing the frosty air. It is an eye which once seen can never be forgotten, from its noble expression of genius. The rugged soul of the sbirro is perhaps moved for the first time in his life. Must this man be taken and led to the scaffold?—His compassion is excited and he stands still, unable at once to give the word of command to his men.

"Maladetto! why don't you arrest him? you shall be hanged in his place," cried the priest, exhibiting signs of anger in his countenance truly maniacal.

"It is not my fault, my dear Signor Furioso," said the man; "we expected that the bird would stop here to dip his beak like everybody else

that goes by this way ; at least you would have thought the driver would never have gone past without wetting his throat with a glass ; but these devils are gone a-head without ever stopping to get an indulgence"—(Ita. *prender la perdonanza*) a popular expression used in Italy with regard to a man who stops to drink at every public-house he passes, as a devotee stops to say a prayer at every church. "But it seems these people are not devotees of Bacchus, and it is no fault of ours."

Thus spoke the chief of the Sbirri, as if he wished to gain time.

"Stir yourself, wretch!" cried the priest again, furiously, "or I will have you imprisoned. Run directly, every one of you, to overtake that man, for he is one of the chiefs of the revolutionary party, and the enemy both of God and the Emperor."

The Sbirri had all risen to their feet, had taken their carbines, and were ready to rush out, only waiting for the command of their chief : but he, wishing to secure the prey without running any risk, said—

"Stop! he is already fifty yards off; we

cannot overtake him without making a noise ; he would perceive that he was followed, and he is in a position to kill us all before we could reach him. Those two demons taking up their position above us and behind a rock, can easily keep fifteen at a distance ; and besides, those revolutionist dogs have always plenty of arms that never miss fire. His car, I'll be bound to say, is well furnished with them. He has two good miles to go before he gets to the top of the hill ; if we take the cross road, we have only half a mile's run. There is a turn at that point—we can keep behind unobserved, and fall upon him unexpectedly, and he cannot make the least resistance."

The project was highly approved by the men, who were willing enough to perform the undertaking with the least possible risk. The disguised priest was not so well pleased, but, under the circumstances, it seemed the only plan, and its success he thought was certain. There was no other carriage-way except one to which you came first, a little lower down, much frequented, and going a long way round at the back of the mountain, on which the traveller would not ven-

ture ; while on the plain, before the mountains, there were so many roads, that it was not possible to guess by which the enemy might have come. This was the reason he was watched for at this spot by the myrmidons of the police, who were unconsciously honoured with the company of the priest in disguise, because it was better that Francesco should be pointed out to those who were appointed to arrest him by one who knew him, than to trust to a simple description, or a bad portrait drawn from memory by order of the Government, with the poor pencil of a bad artist. Good artists are but seldom willing to serve the Government against patriots.

We have now sufficiently explained the disguise of the priest among the mountains, so far distant from Venice and so near Lunacó: it was because Don Giuseppe was determined to make the blow sure: for he would not be a traitor uselessly, with the risk of undertaking the office for nothing. He was like the cat, which never aims a blow without being sure of hitting its mark.

Having laid their plan of attack, the soldiers

issued forth from the house, shouldering their carbines and pursuing the road agreed upon, first, however, giving a rough salute, accompanied by an oath, to the priest, whom they believed to be in some sort a comrade. But they were mistaken, they were too good for such a comrade; they were not priests. The priest congratulated himself that their parting salute was not one for the escape of his enemy.

He waited for some time at the inn to see whether anything occurred. About an hour afterwards the carriage returned with only the driver, who made his horse gallop down the hill as fast as the ice would permit. "The work is done quickly and well," thought the priest, looking out of the window, his soul glowing with a joy he had rarely experienced. It was the first blow with which he had ever thoroughly succeeded. His abhorred rival would now soon be executed, and he revenged. He would have liked to interrogate the driver, but he did not at once trust himself to do so. The man drove down the hill so quickly, that the priest was not in time to stop him, and if he had called out, probably the driver would only have increased

his pace after the fright he must just have experienced on the arrest of Francesco. Moreover, the appearance of the driver was by no means rough and vulgar ; nay, he had something too much of the gentleman about him for such a calling. He was not mistaken. The driver was no *vetturino*, but a patriot in disguise from another province, who was anxious to conduct himself his friend Francesco in safety to his place of destination.

Feeling safe as to the result, the priest turned back. He walked some miles, and reassumed the attire of a gentleman which he was wearing, instead of his own priest's garb. He then proceeded a little lower down the road, found his carriage, and galloped along the other road to which we have already referred, towards Lunaco. We will shortly return to him, but for the present let us follow the Sbirri.

In about a quarter of an hour they reached the appointed spot. There they waited ; an hour passed, and no carriage arrived. Two hours elapsed, still they saw nothing of it. They thought that the horse must have fallen, and that both gentleman and driver were detained in

consequence ; and, like good Christians, to help the horse to rise, should their fears prove well-founded, they set out on the road by which the vehicle ought to come. They descended the hill and saw nothing. They reached the inn, and the host, who had been occupied in another part of the place, told them he had seen nothing of the carriage. Their friend the spy, the priest in disguise, had been gone more than an hour. They could no longer help thinking that the man they sought had interrogated some passenger, who had told him of the presence of the Sbirri in the neighbourhood, and that he had escaped by returning as he came. The induction was quite reasonable, as they had been seen by some country people when they came. What were they to do now ? Hasten back to the city, and give notice of the occurrence to the police ? But to do this, they had several miles to travel, and on foot.

The reader, no less astonished than the ignoble persons of this chapter, will ask with curiosity, what had become of Francesco that he was thus suddenly rendered invisible. He will find that Francesco was saved by one of those Providential

interpositions whose effects so often fill the human mind with gratitude, and holy fear, and adoration. The spot which to the priest appeared so secure for the capture of Francesco, was precisely the only spot where he could avoid the blow. He had never gone directly to Lunaco, when he had been there to confer with the head of the secret committee. Between the inn and the summit of the ascent was a narrow path through the mountains. It was scarcely a foot-path, and was at all times a most perilous way; but now the snow rendered it almost impracticable for a human being; at least other people would have considered it so, but it was practicable for Francesco. That he might not be recognised in his native place, he was accustomed to leave the highway just at this point, to take the pass between the mountains. This he had done on previous occasions, and he despatched a messenger the day before, to give notice to the chief of the committee of his arrival, and to appoint a place of meeting remote from the town, that they might confer with less danger.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A PRECIOUS LIFE CONFIDED TO AN ENEMY'S
HAND FOR SAFETY.

DON GIUSEPPE believing his work of iniquity consummated, for the accomplishment of which he had even accused the head and the members of the secret committee of Lunaco to the Austrian authorities, on his return from the little roadside inn, asked himself, "And now what have I to do next? My mortal enemy is in the hands of the stern Austrian police, who will take good care of him. They will make him pay amply both his old debts and his new. I am now revenged upon him and, through him, upon the woman who has been so fatal to my peace, and upon her precious female counsellor likewise, until a better opportunity

shall offer itself to accomplish my vengeance on both of them. Meanwhile the man is in the power of those who will inflict upon him torments both of body and mind, sufficient to satisfy me, had he offended me more atrociously than he has. Well, I am revenged upon him, but the others—what have they done that they should perish, and perish by my fault, in having been a spy upon them ? ” Here the sentiment of personal dignity and natural pride made him shudder at the thought, that he was now linked with the most abject of men, the spy. Neither his pride nor his taste would have permitted him to descend so low. “ No,” he said, “ I ought to save them, even at the risk of my life. I must do so, indeed, or I shall always feel remorse at having been the cause of the death of so many innocent men, who never wronged me.” He felt gratified to dwell upon the generous thought, flattering himself that he was not so bad after all, while he felt so much for others—that he was gentle and humane towards them, having reserved his ferocity for his enemies. He was proud of his humanity and gentleness. “ If I save them,” thought he, “ I remove at Venice

every cause of suspicion against myself, and the Austrian police will never know by whom they have been warned, so that by performing a generous action, I shall save myself with both parties." This was a strong argument, and decided the jesuitical priest to perform the virtuous deed.

But he was a Jesuit bold and daring. Perils to him were nothing ; he braved them resolutely whenever he had determined to encounter them. On reaching his carriage, which awaited him at the foot of the mountain on the road to Lunaco, he gave orders to take this road with all possible speed. Although the vehicle was hired, the horses were handsome, powerful creatures, and the journey was soon accomplished. The beautiful town of Lunaco appeared in the distance, as in a charming panorama. The priest stopped in a village near the town at an inn, where he was utterly unknown, and could keep concealed. The evening was already far advanced, when he went out to accomplish the generous project he had determined to effect. He walked straightway to the head of the secret committee, recounted to him the particulars of the

arrest of the messenger at Treviso, and called his attention to the perilous position of the committee. The messenger, he said, might be induced to confess ; the papers of which he was the bearer, although written so ambiguously, might afford proofs against them. But though he spoke to the chief, he was morally certain that the messenger would never betray any trust reposed in him, though he might be torn to pieces. He, it was, who had betrayed them !

The chief of the committee appeared for a moment completely bewildered. What was to be done ? He had still time to gain a place of safety—but he could not think of leaving the members of the committee and all the rest who were compromised to perish. Oh, no ! until all were safe, he would never desert his post. He wrote twenty letters containing only the word, “Escape ! we are discovered,” and, calling an attached domestic, charged him to find four messengers, among whom he distributed the letters, that they might be circulated without delay. He was then about to provide for his own flight, and Don Giuseppe was just leaving him, when, suddenly striking his forehead, he

cried—"What will become of Francesco Fantoni? gracious heavens! he will be lost! I cannot fly until he is in safety."

"Why are you anxious about him?" asked the priest, with trembling heart.

"Because he sent a messenger yesterday to tell me that he would meet me to-morrow morning at eight o'clock. He crosses the mountain of Talbuso to come here, and is driven by a friend in disguise to the road which runs up by the mountain not far from the Osteria del Gambero (the inn at which the soldiers and the priest awaited Francesco). He always comes by that road, and waits for me at the inn near the village of Staripa, and there he will be at the time appointed."

The priest's cheek was blanched. He could now clearly explain to himself the mystery of the carriage returning so quickly and quietly. He cursed himself as a fool, and ejaculated imprecations against his own folly; but it was done, and it was of no use thinking of the past, but only of the remedy.

"Oh, never fear for him," said he. "You must not risk your life to no purpose. I will see

about him. I will go to the inn, and warn him of his danger. It will be no risk for me, though you could not do so without arousing suspicion. You can secure your own safety, and rest satisfied that he will have time to fly."

The proposition was so well coloured that it was impossible the slightest misgiving should occur to the chief. How could he suspect the priest, who was giving such evident proofs of devotion? He therefore accepted Don Giuseppe's offer with gratitude.

To the great regret of the priest, who wished to perform the service as quickly as possible, he found that Francesco never stayed at the inn in question, but arrived there at an hour fixed with the chief: where he took up his abode in the meantime, the chief did not know. This was a fresh perplexity, but Don Giuseppe would not give up his project. The blow must be struck securely, and he therefore determined to give notice to the Austrian authorities of the intended meeting at eight o'clock, that Francesco might be arrested. The priest took his leave, promising to save Francesco, and received the warm

thanks of the other, who at once commenced his preparations for flight.

Don Giuseppe thought it wiser not to inform the police of Francesco's assignation until later in the evening, lest, if the picquets were put in motion at once, Francesco should be informed of it, and escape again. He desired that a company of men should be secretly posted in the inn at an early hour in the morning, to be ready when Francesco arrived at eight o'clock, and then he thought his plans must succeed. Before taking any further steps, he therefore retired to reconsider the part he had to perform.

CHAPTER XXX.

ADVENTURES OF A DRIVER OF A CART AND A
COUNTRYMAN, NOT AN EPISODE.

THE priest of Rivalta ceased to meddle in political affairs after the flight of the Pope. He was a conscientious man, sincere in his errors, and did not feel it right to unite with others in opposing the head of the holy Mother Church. Therefore, though he loved his country, and had been extremely active in the first instance, he now remained quiet. He enjoyed so high a reputation, however, that many political secrets were confided to him by his friend at the head of the Committee, but he knew nothing from him about Don Giuseppe, because, as we said, the chief had given his word of honour that he would not mention the reverend conspirator's

name. The chief was ignorant of the priest's true character, having been in the neighbourhood but a few years.

Don Domenico now chanced to call upon his friend, who took him apart, pressed his hand, and told him of the arrest of the messenger and his own impending flight, also of his having despatched letters to warn his colleagues. He had scarcely had time to explain, and Don Domenico was just bidding him adieu, when a messenger hastily arrived, bearing a letter from Francesco, signifying that he should be at the place of rendezvous at ten o'clock that evening, as he did not wish to remain all night in the neighbourhood if it were possible to avoid it. The chief had no sooner read the letter than he communicated its contents to their common friend, Don Domenico, at the same time expressing the greatest anxiety as to the best course to pursue, seeing that the person who had just left him had undertaken to warn Francesco the next morning at the hour when they were to have met.

None of our readers will doubt that the priest of Rivalta immediately undertook to meet him,

and aid him in his flight. Quietcd by this assurance, the chief arranged his affairs as a man of honour, burned his papers, gave orders to his faithful attendant, and, having no domestic ties being unmarried, quietly left his house. As if taking a stroll for pleasure, he walked beyond the town. There he was met by a guard of sbirri instead of the carriage he had ordered, and was taken prisoner. He had no defence to offer on his examination, but as some material proof was wanting, he was condemned to twenty years' imprisonment, instead of being shot. All the others arrived at Venice within a day or two, with the exception of Francesco Fantoni. Don Giuseppe, who quickly reached that city, explained most satisfactorily to himself, why Francesco was not among the arrivals. Had he not communicated to the Austrian police the appointment for eight o'clock in the morning?

This infamous transaction of the priest escaped all suspicion and investigation. He gave his own version of the affair, and readily obtained credence. And it was the more easy to do so, since he well knew that the chief of the secret

Committee of Lunaco was in the clutches of the Austrian authorities—a lucky thing for him, inasmuch as he was enabled to colour his report the better, although, had the chief escaped, he would still have managed to avoid all suspicion. If Francesco were only taken, he had obtained all, without in the least exposing himself—a double success, which would be the height of triumph for him. Should Francesco not be taken, there was nothing to bring home the accusation of treachery against him, and he might recommence his vengeful arts. If this man were not worthy to govern an empire, it certainly was not from defect of cleverness or wickedness !

Meanwhile, the priest of Rivalta racked his brain to find the best mode of saving his friend. To warn him only going to the inn dressed as a priest, was an undertaking full of peril, and in itself most incomplete. If his enemies tracked his steps, they might easily discover and capture him. He must find means to accompany Francesco through the enemy's country, and place him in safety. If the bad seem often gifted with an especial power to commit evil, the good have frequently powers of imagination

fully equivalent, aided, doubtless, by a spirit from on high.

A day or two before, the priest had accumulated four hundred pounds of butter from his collection. The Romish priests very frequently receive offerings of goods and money for themselves—offerings which constitute a large part of their benefice. He possessed a horse and cart, the former of which, though not spirited, was strong and tolerably fast. He told his servant, whom he could trust, that he engaged to save a friend, hunted by the police for political offences, and that, in consequence, he must load the cart with the butter, harness the horse, and procure a carter's dress. This was done within an hour. The rustic countenance of the priest, his rather uncultivated manners and somewhat harsh voice and well-feigned common language, and the natural disposition of the kind-hearted Don Domenico, all were in admirable keeping with the appearance of a carter, or *vetturino*, or hawker, whichever character he might choose to assume. His dress was well suited to his not over-elegant person, and his whole appearance was so consistent with his garb, that his clever disguise was really ad-

mirable, and he himself would quite have enjoyed the joke, had he not felt too great anxiety respecting Francesco.

He left the house after having charged the chaplain to attend to the parish alone for two days or so. The chaplain was the young man he had protected—and a trusty man he was. He took with him a suit of countryman's clothes, a razor, and arms — a fact which proves his extreme thoughtfulness and coolness.

It was night, in the depth of winter, the sky perfectly dark, and he reached the inn two hours after leaving his village, without being observed by any one. Happily no one at the *osteria* recognised him; and this was his greatest fear connected with the success of the undertaking. Having knocked and entered and disposed of his horse and cart, he introduced himself with an air of rough ease, speaking in such rustic style, that no one could entertain a suspicion that he was other than he appeared. In one corner of the chimney, a moderate measure of wine before him, and smoking a cigar, was a man dressed as a citizen, and wearing a fine beard. His appearance was marked

by an affable superiority, but he was too intent upon his own thoughts to join in conversation with the other guests. The carter looked at him, and his heart bounded with joy; but he felt it necessary to approach him with prudence, to avoid the danger of his first emotion of surprise. He seated himself not far from him, but he had not yet been observed by the man, except as he lifted his eyes on the entrance of the carter, to assure himself that it was no hostile arrival. The carter was the first to speak.

"It is very cold, your honour," said he, touching his hat.

The gentleman with the black beard, and thoughtful eye, started at the voice. He looked at the person who addressed him, and recognised him; but, like one prepared for every emergency, and accustomed to maintain the utmost coolness under all circumstances, he saw at once how to act, without betraying any imprudent surprise.

"Yes, my good man, it is indeed cold," returned he.

"I can tell your honour, I am very sorry

that my business compels me to go on again directly. I would a vast deal rather stop by this good fire."

"Yes, and I must be going soon," said the other, who directly understood what his friend meant to convey.

"Which way may your Honour be going? if I may make bold to inquire; I am going towards Lunaco." It was the opposite direction that he intended to take, but he said so to give Francesco a hint what answer he ought to make; and he, taking the cue from Don Domenico, said—

"I am going in the same direction. You have a cart, I think, and I shall be very glad to pay for a seat with you."

"With all my heart, sir," replied the man, touching his hat.

They concluded the bargain, and half an hour afterwards, the host was paid, and they set off together in the cart towards Lunaco. When they were alone, the disguised carter said hastily—

"I have come to save you. The police are dogging your steps; the secret Committee is

discovered, the chief who had nearly escaped, the moment he was stepping into a carriage, was surprised and arrested." He had the intelligence a few minutes before he left his house from the chaplain, who by chance saw a man that happened to be witness to the chief's arrest.

Don Domenico narrated to his friend the various occurrences of the day. They had no choice but to take the public carriage-road ; they trusted to the darkness of the night for safety, and gained ground rapidly. As they journeyed together, they decided what was to be done the following day to secure Francesco's flight. He uttered few words of gratitude, and pressed the hand of his brave friend with affection and admiration. A noble soul lay hidden beneath that carter's attire !

They travelled for six hours without stopping a moment, and without any accident whatever. The cold was most intense, and the horse was fatigued ; still they pursued their way until day dawned, when they reached an inn, where they stopped a while. Under some pretext Francesco shaved off his beard with the razor brought by Don Domenico.

They gave the landlord ten francs on his promise not to tell that they had been there. No doubt he kept his promise ; for ten good francs who could do less than hold his tongue ?

They set off again as soon as the horse was rested and themselves warmed. In a retired spot, Francesco changed his clothes, and appeared as a countryman. He would never have been recognized as Francesco Fantoni—but as a peasant, his aspect was so noble and his beauty so striking, that he would have been worthy the love of a princess.

Thus disguised, they go forward without any interruption. They pass Treviso without attracting any attention as a poor driver and a peasant, and are already some miles from the town. They stop at an inn, as it is imperatively necessary to obtain food for the horse and warmth and breakfast for themselves. They enter, and the driver, whose countenance best accords with his dress, gives orders in rustic fashion. The refreshments are brought. They have commenced eating, when a company of six sbirri enter the room. They drink, and shout, and utter the most ribald expressions, without paying any

heed to the two countrymen. They speak of a bird that has flown, and proclaim that they are on the watch to catch. They have received strict orders from the police to traverse all the roads cautiously, and scrupulously examine every inn and place.

They have already spent one day in trying to hunt out the game without success. Among them is the man who saw Francesco's beard and eyes when he was pointed out by the priest. On this account, he is now sent to investigate, with severe threats, if he find not the culprits.

"By the Virgin Mary," he exclaimed, "I am determined to find the scamp that has played me such a trick! I would drag him out of the very depth of hell!"

The scamp was close to him. The carter and his companion now rose and left. At the noise caused by the moving of the cart, the sbirro mechanically looked out of the window.

"By the Virgin Mary!" he cried once more, "I declare the bird has escaped me again! We had them here! Those are the same eyes, I vow! Fool that I was not to recognize him!"

Quick, my lads! Up with your carbines! March!"

To accomplish all this occupied some three or four minutes. The carter's horse felt the unmerciful lash of the whip as a novelty, and its effects were greatly heightened by surprise. He galloped at his utmost speed, but the ground was covered with fresh snow, and thick flakes continued to fall, so that his course was greatly impeded. But, for the same reason, the men in pursuit could make but little way. Still they were gaining ground upon the horse. The two friends coolly consulted together as to the best plan of proceeding; should they stop, or run on as long as possible? They wisely decided that it was best to allow themselves to be so followed, and let the men fire their carbines running. Their fatigue, and the consequent tremor of their pulse and their breathlessness, would be sure to prevent their shots from hitting the mark. Both of the fugitives were sportsmen, and well acquainted with the use of firearms. Francesco, too, had been in several engagements during the insurrectionary war, and felt little alarm at the chance of a shot, for he well knew that it is

not easy to hit an object when the mind is agitated. Man, aiming at his fellow man, misses his aim much oftener than when he fires at game. The cause may be that man, however ferocious he is, feels an irrepressible shudder when he directs the murderous arms against his brother.

The horse, then, continues to gallop, his back bleeding with the hard blows which the priest unceasingly inflicts, unconsciously, without mercy; for this once he will be pardoned for ill-treating his beast. A shot is fired—a ball whizzes past them. The travellers have already prepared their arms. They stop—another report! One of the balls passes through the hat of the priest; another shot is fired. This time the ball enters Francesco's cloak. They fire two shots, and two of the men fall. The others stand and fire again together. The two that have already fired re-load their guns, but the two friends load again and fire at the same moment. The priest's face is slightly touched by a ball. A protecting angel must have turned it aside, for it has only just grazed the skin—while one of the men falls, killed or wounded. The strife is now

two against three ; but, how great the advantage of the two ? They approach with formidable air—their guns are not loaded, but they are armed with swords. The three men stand as if dazzled by the glitter of the others' weapons, and give themselves up for lost. They try to unsheath their swords, but of what effect are the rude arts of the ruffians against the practised skill and dexterity of Francesco, and the indomitable courage of the priest ? Had they desired to kill the three they could easily have done so ; but they wished to save their lives, and, therefore, prolonged the contest. The priest, especially, was most anxious to avoid killing them, and, while fighting, said, " Let us save their lives, if possible."

" Well, we will spare them, then, if you wish it," said Francesco. As he spoke he aimed a tremendous back-handed blow at the arm of the chief man, and it fell powerless by his side. The priest reversed his sabre and struck the other a blow with the back, which stretched him senseless on the ground. " That is enough," said he. The third fell on his knees and begged for mercy. The two friends took him and the chief

and, using for their benefit the manacles and fetters destined for themselves, bound them to a tree, and also fettered the one who, by the blow of Don Domenico, was senseless on the ground.

The priest ran from one to the other of the other three men, stretched down, fearing they were dead, and feeling most anxious about them. He saw that they were all living, and that their wounds were not dangerous. He uttered heartfelt thanks to the God of Mercy, who had preserved him from committing homicide; a misfortune he would have wept over to the end of his days, although it would have been in a case of necessity. He comforted them, saying, "I am very sorry to have reduced you to such a state, but it was to save our own lives." He took out his purse and gave fifty francs to one of the wounded men, saying, "There, that will cure you. The first person I meet I will send to you." The men made no reply, but it was easy to see, from their countenances, that they were moved by this unexpected kindness.

"Domenico!" at length exclaimed Francesco, "we must make haste, or else we shall forfeit our lives. We shall be seized if we stay here."

They soon came to the cart; the horse had not moved a step; he seemed to possess intelligence, and to know that he ought to await his master's return; and, moreover, the poor creature was probably not at all sorry to enjoy the rest. They entered the cart and tried their utmost to urge on the horse; but they found the poor animal incapable of moving at more than a foot's pace. They therefore decided that it would be better to leave it on the road; and the rather, as they could not continue on their present track, for they were sure to be followed. They had not proceeded far, when they came to a poor farmer's cottage. They knocked, and a man of robust form made his appearance. The priest said, "My friend, we have a favour to beg." The farmer replied, "I do not know whether you are what you seem, or whether you are gentlemen; but I have just seen you deal some famous blows, and you are certainly powerful fellows. I would willingly receive you into my house, and offer you refreshment, for you are no evil-disposed persons, I am sure, but messengers from Venice. I love our country, and should be glad to serve you; but if I were to

receive you into my house, it would be no place of security for you, and I might get myself into trouble."

"No," said the priest; "we are much obliged to you, my good man, but that is not the favour we ask. We only want to leave the horse and cart here, that we may escape. I know you are a brave man, and an Italian at heart."

"Yes, to be sure," answered he, proudly, "I am an Italian."

"You will tell us, then, which is the safest road to Venice, and you will not betray us. The horse and cart and goods we will leave with you to keep for your own, only we beg you will go to the poor wounded men and give them what assistance you can."

The farmer willingly promised all they asked, and thanked them for their present, but said he was afraid that it would get him into difficulty. He was reassured by Francesco, who told him that no one would take the trouble to investigate the manner in which he became possessed of the horse and cart, and, at all events, he could use the butter if nothing else: and so the man thought it would be a pity to throw away such

a piece of good fortune. He promised to render speedy assistance to the sufferers and to keep their secret, and pointing out to them a cross road by which they would be less likely to be seen than by the high road, took his leave of them. They set off on foot along the road indicated.

They had but a few miles to walk before they would find themselves in safety—but these were miles of extreme peril. Every place was filled with soldiers belonging to the enemy's forces, which were besieging Venice. They met patrols, but as they came in the opposite direction from the spot where their encounter had taken place, they entertained no fear that they were seeking them, and the dress and air assumed by the travellers were their safeguard. They met entire regiments, but the officers seemed not to consider them worthy of notice. When they had walked some miles, they saw a man running towards them at full speed. They cocked their pistols, the only arms they had kept after their recent fight, and turned to watch whether he was followed by others. He was alone, and they allowed him to approach,

when he said to them in haste and without stopping, that he might not be observed talking with them—"I am brother to the man to whom you gave the cart. There is a troop of sbirri not far off in search of you. You have no chance of saving yourselves except by running into the middle of the field and covering yourselves over with the snow."

He had no sooner spoken than he began to accelerate his pace, which he had slackened to utter these words. The two friends bounded over into the field, seeing clearly that this was their only chance. They threw themselves among the snow, and that which was falling soon covered them. Shortly after, the sbirri came up; cursing their hard fate, their perils, their calling, and the fugitives—they passed on without looking into the field. The two who were at a very short distance heard all as they lay buried in the snow. That they should escape seemed miraculous. It was near evening, and they remained in their truly miserable position until it was quite dark. They then set forward again, but only to meet with fresh dangers at every step. A thousand times death seemed to

stare them in the face—and they were frequently compelled to betake themselves to the snow for security. For five days they were concealed in the house of a patriot until the rigorous search made for them was relaxed. At length having passed through numberless dangers, death seemingly ever at hand, they succeeded in gaining the fortifications which from Mestre led to Marghera. This passage was tolerably safe, because just there was a space between the Italian cannon and that of the enemy. As they reached the advanced post of the former, they met a flying picquet. The officer demanded the password; they did not know it, but they discovered themselves. The officer naturally enough distrusted them, and gave orders that they should be escorted to the fortress. They were received by the Commander, to whom Francesco narrated his dangers and the services he had received from his friend. A warm welcome was given to both the men, who had been so miraculously saved. They were furnished with clothes and well supplied with refreshments, and for some hours they enjoyed restoring slumber in the fortress, thanking God most sincerely

for having enabled them to overcome all dangers.

In the evening they took a boat and reached Venice in safety. The hour was late when they arrived, and therefore they deferred presenting themselves to the Government until the following day.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A CLOUDY DAY FOLLOWED BY A SERENE NIGHT
OF VIRTUOUS DELIGHT.

DURING this period Amalia, who in former days scarcely left the house, paid a great many visits, incited by the hope of hearing the praises of Francesco sounded by persons unconscious of her attachment to him. He had rendered himself so conspicuous by his activity, prudence, and courage, that his deeds were often the theme of discourse. True, sometimes days would pass without the mention of his name in her presence, but ever and anon the perseverance of her loving heart was rewarded. A hint, a word, proving that he was honoured and admired, sufficed to gladden her thoughts for days and days. But alas! she now heard too much.

Accidentally, in a conversation at a friend's house, she heard of his danger. Happily she knew not the full extent of the peril, or she could scarcely have endured the anxiety. Her friends said that the Government were most anxious respecting Francesco Fantoni, who had left Venice on an important mission among the enemy. However, seeing the deep impression the announcement produced upon her, they qualified their first assertion by saying that they understood he had come off victorious in one encounter. They sought to mitigate the effects of the intelligence and to withdraw, in part, what they had previously said; but finding they only made matters worse, they were careful not to tell any more of the particulars with which they were acquainted.

In her anguish, Amalia could not conceal her love for him. Yet her grief did not so far overpower her self-control as to permit her to display her overwhelming anguish to profane eyes, though this certainly would have been the case, had the truth been fully known to her. Had she known all, it would have been too much: but hope sustained her.

She soon returned home, accompanied to her gondola by the kind and sympathising friends who had plunged her thus unintentionally into grief and anguish. When alone in the gondola, she closed the windows, and wept bitterly but silently. On reaching the house she threw herself on her knees and exclaimed, "Oh, God! save him! Prostrate on the ground I entreat of Thee to save him! Take my life instead of his! Oh, Holy Virgin, protect him! Protect him, I entreat!" She could say no more, but burst into a violent flood of tears.

The Signora degli Adorni, who had just received from other sources the intelligence of Francesco's danger, flew to her friend with little hope in her heart; but finding that Amalia was still ignorant of the worst, she endeavoured to comfort her and excite her hopes, herself trusting that God would bring him safely through. She prayed no less fervently than Amalia herself, and their Heavenly Father was pleased to hear their prayers.

This state of anxiety lasted but one day; the day following was the one on which Francesco reached Venice safe and well. On arriving

home he found a letter from the Signora degli Adorni, written without Amalia's knowledge, requesting him immediately on his return to call upon the Signora. He went to her before presenting himself to the Governor. It was late, as we said, in the evening. The Signora, on meeting him, in the joyous enthusiasm of her heart, kissed his forehead. Hers was an angel's kiss, at sight of which Amalia herself would have smiled complacently. She then cautiously explained to him the anxiety of poor Amalia, and the necessity of preparing her for the announcement of his return, lest she should be overcome by sudden revulsion of feeling. Francesco's sensations as he listened were those of ineffable delight. They went together to the Countess's house. The Signora entered the room alone, and with smiling countenance said to the afflicted Countess, who was constantly in tears—

“Take courage, Amalia, I have good news for you.”

“Oh, Holy Virgin!” said the Countess, “he has returned!”

"We may expect him directly," replied the Signora.

"Then he is still in danger!" exclaimed the Countess, relapsing into a burst of grief.

"No, no, he is safe, and will soon be here."

"Oh, you only say so to comfort me—it cannot be true."

"Yes, it is; he is at Venice."

"Oh, I do thank thee, Blessed Virgin," she exclaimed, throwing herself on her knees, and praying fervently; but soon checking herself, she exclaimed, in the agitation of anxiety and hope,

"But no, he cannot be at Venice, or he would surely have flown to console his Amalia?"

"And to console his Amalia he *has* flown," said her friend.

"Oh! where, where is he? where are you, my Francesco?"

Her Francesco was holding her in his arms, blending his tears with hers. Their delight, this time, was pure and celestial. The eye of the priest was not there to watch them!

Their first transport past, Amalia gently released herself from his arms, and, with eyes cast

down, blushing in maidenly modesty, she took his hand, saying in a soft low tone,

"That is enough, my Francesco; you are safe and I am happy; guard your life for my sake, but guard it only as far as the good of your country permits. Fight for your country, but do not, I implore, again expose yourself among the enemy as you have done."

"I shall not expose myself again, my angel," said the delighted Francesco. "I could never again hope to escape observation, and it would be certain death, without any advantage to the country. Though I cannot hope to enjoy the supreme felicity my heart covets, still I am indeed happy at this moment."

"Why can you not?" asked the Signora, speaking for the first time.

"Because I am not changed," answered he, sighing.

"But if you are not changed, Amalia may be," said Amalia's friend.

"Is it so, my sweet treasure?" exclaimed he hastily, taking both her hands and kissing them repeatedly.

"I do not fear that God disapproves of my

affection for such a man as my Francesco is :— He would not have directed him towards me through so many difficulties,—He would not have preserved him from so many dangers, in order that I should see him as now, in the height of his glory and manly nobleness, before me—if my Francesco was not dear to Him, and if He did not sanction my tenderness !”

“ Then you will be mine ?” cried Francesco in rapture.

“ Yes, yours for ever,” answered she in a scarcely intelligible voice ; but so touching, so meek, that it appeared the breathing of an angel uttering the word of blessing upon man.

At that moment, had Francesco not been a Christian, he would have cast himself at Amalia’s feet, and worshipped her. Instead, he raised his clasped hands to Heaven, and exclaimed in tones of fervent gratitude and love, “ I thank thee, oh, my God ! I adore thy decrees and bless my past sufferings. I thank thee, oh, God, for thy mercies. Thou art bestowing upon me too great a measure of felicity.” Thus saying he threw himself into a chair, as if overcome by emotion, and pressed his hand to his heart.

He seemed ready to expire with the excess of joy.

“But you had suffered so much before, Francesco,” said Amalia with sweet and noble sentiment, approaching him and kissing his forehead, as if she meant to convey that he need not be afraid of being too happy while his felicity rendered him more devoted to God, and induced him more fervently to adore. Francesco was no longer a heretic to her eyes, nor was she any longer a Roman Catholic in Francesco’s sight, but a Christian in true benignity of heart and purity of faith. In the delight of their felicity they parted with a tender kiss.

The news of the engagement of the Countess Alfredini and Signor Francesco Fantoni, soon spread through the upper circle of Venice. It was considered an excellent match on the ground of expediency. The want of great riches and high birth on the side of the young man was compensated by his personal merits. The ladies, who judge more from sentiment than interest, declared that a better-assorted couple the world had never seen. Francesco did not however suffer his private affairs to interfere with his political

duties, nor was he less daring than he would under other circumstances—an incontestable proof of true valour, for who, in his place, would not value life? But he never sought to spare himself when called upon to expose his life for the benefit of his country. The provisional Government of Venice created him a staff-officer, and in his new post he conducted himself like the man he was.

Francesco was stationed at Marghera, then bombarded from Mestre by the Austrians, and it was but rarely he could see his heart's beloved. Though her bosom was continually agitated by fears for his life, she tried to endure the anxiety heroically, and dearly as she loved him, she bore the knowledge of his peril with the firmness displayed by other noble Venetian ladies who witnessed the danger of those dear to them.

It was decided that the marriage should be delayed until the destiny of the country was settled. The lovers had still many trials to undergo. Who could tell whether so great felicity would ever be granted to them? It seemed almost too great to be enjoyed by mortals in this lower world!

CHAPTER XXXII.

WHICH FURNISHES MATTER FOR THE MOST
WARLIKE WRITER, WHO CAN, AND WILL,
VINDICATE THE GLORY OF THE ITALIAN
NAME.

THE fortress of Marghera had fallen, after a brave defence of many months' duration. The Austrians, on entering the place, must have been astonished and awestricken, to see how much men can endure, when actuated by a generous motive. The fort had been rigorously besieged for at least four months. During this period, innumerable projectiles were hurled from the powerful batteries of the enemy. The fort, though only second rate, was unremittingly supplied with stores from Venice, and the enemy's fire was vigorously returned. But the number

of the men killed, and the amount of ammunition expended were very considerable. The garrison were ever in motion, passing with imperturbable courage from one place to another in the midst of the enemy's cannonade, those who were falling, being eagerly replaced by others. The casements were almost demolished, the bastions nearly torn up, the guns rendered useless or dangerous from repeated firing, and being thoroughly heated, they oftentimes severely wounded and mutilated the men who had the charge of them. Death also came direct from the enemy in the form of cannon balls, bombshells, and other destructive projectiles, which were for months poured upon works of no great strength. The time arrived however when further resistance was impossible. Those who were most experienced in such matters gave it as their opinion, that with three hours' longer firing the whole place would be one mass of ruins, and the garrison in the hands of the enemy. In this emergency some decided step must be taken. If the fortification were stormed, and the besieged had to fight hand to hand with the enemy, they would never yield, but would

sooner, exacting a price for their lives, die than fall into the hands of the Austrians. But such was not the case. It was resolved to effect a retreat—and the retreat, like the defence, was above all praise. Nothing was left behind that it was possible to save. The garrison destroyed the works which could by any chance be used against them. They spiked the greater part of the cannon, though they did not carry off the guns, because they were no longer serviceable, and the effort would be too great. All the baggage was prepared, and at ten o'clock in the evening the troops evacuated the fortress, and marched to Venice, leaving some of the artillerymen behind to keep up a slight firing, in order to delude the enemy, and induce them to believe that the defence was still continued.

The day following, for some time, the Austrians kept, as usually, a furious fire against the fortress, before they perceived that the garrison had retired. The enemy's own dispatches spoke with wonder and admiration of the state in which they found Marghera. The valour of the defenders could be appreciated by the ruined condition to which the place was reduced. The

enemy then proceeded in their operations against Venice by besieging the railway bridge, which was defended, only, by eight pieces of cannon. This bridge held out for several months—the parapets being destroyed by balls every day, and restored every night. This small battery kept at bay an entire army, and cost the enemy an incalculable amount of loss in materials of war and men. At the same time two-thirds of the city of Venice was bombarded for months, during which a hundred thousand shots and shells were hurled against it, and two thirds of the inhabitants crowded upon the third part. The portion of the city not reached by the enemy's balls consisted principally of the lowest districts; but the Piazza of St. Marco and its vicinity were also safe from them. Rich and noble families were obliged to live in the meanest houses, and some were scarcely able even to find shelter in boats and barges, called *burchj*, which are roofed. The poor families slept in the streets, leaving their habitations for greater security. Provisions failed; but, notwithstanding all, the Venetians were resolutely bent on resisting. To add to their ills, the cholera at length burst out; but

still no class of citizens, from the poorest to the richest, ever thought of yielding. When at length Venice did yield, so scarce were provisions that it was calculated the rations in store for the troops would have lasted but a single day, or little more, and these of the most unwholesome kind. For many weeks the cholera had carried off more than three hundred victims a day, and the war had decimated the troops, among which fever and pestilence had produced the most terrible destruction. Although both ammunition and provisions were exhausted, the Austrians were compelled to accede to an honourable capitulation to obtain possession of Venice. Not only to the Venetians is praise due for their noble resistance, but numbers of Italians, divided in different legions, according to the different Italian States, from which they came, showed themselves fully equal to the Venetians in firmness and courage.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AN EVIL WORD NEVER FALLS HARMLESS, AND ITS
CONSEQUENCES ARE OFTEN TREMENDOUS.

ABOUT a month before the capitulation of Venice, the report arrived that the chief of the secret committee of Lunaco had been shot. After his first condemnation, more evident proofs were discovered of his conspiracy while at the head of the Committee. Venice received the news with grief, and it was believed that treachery must have been at work to report to the Austrians the proceedings at Lunaco. Then a thought arose in the mind of Don Giuseppe which could have been the mental offspring of none but Don Giuseppe himself.

Having laid aside his priest's dress, he went one evening to a public house (*Osteria*) in one of the

most obscure parts of Venice, where many of the boldest of the lower class met to converse on political affairs. He was decently attired, but not dressed as a citizen. His daring airs caused him to be mistaken for a patriot, and he boldly joined in their discourse, which was to the effect that Venice would never yield, but would resist as long as one stone stood upon another; to which he replied :—

“The Venetians are valorous and brave, but I am most fearful there are spies sneaking about.”

“Oh, if we did but know them to be spies!” said one of the fiercest among them, “we would soon do for them; but how are you to know the traitors?”

“Traitors assume every form,” said Don Giuseppe, the prince of traitors, “but I think that of all classes they are most numerous among the priests.”

“Oh yes,” replied one, “we have discovered some of them, and they were glad to fly, to escape our hands.”

“But there are still some of them remaining,” suggested the tempter, “I very much suspect

that one of them has been the cause of the death of the chief of the Committee of Lunaco—poor man !”

“Oh, if we did but find him out, would not we make him remember ?”

“All you would have to do would be to accuse him to the Government,” said the priest.

“The Government indeed,” said the first speaker ; “the Government has always been too compassionate towards spies !”

“I will tell you the best way to manage it,” said Don Giuseppe, “it will require great caution, if it is the man they suspect. He lives, they say, in the house of a powerful lady of noble birth, who has the reputation of being a perfect Jesuitess.”

“Noble and powerful, what does that signify? All Jesuits are traitors,” answered another.

“Oh, you surely would not harm a respectable family, and a poor widow lady ? However, they say the traitor lives with the Countess Alfredini.”

“Ah, if he lived in the house of B. V,” a common allusion among Italians to the “Beata Vergine,” “we would make him hang for it !”

most obscure parts of Venice, where hardly be-
boldest of the lower class met a young lady,
political affairs. He was kind and charitable,
not dressed as a citizen.

him to be mistaken for a Countess," said one of the
joined in their discourse.

that Venice would remove all suspicions," said Don
as long as one could soften the impression, now
which he replied that had taken effect, "and

"The Venetians are done at present. I will investi-
but I am for myself, and if I find any truth
about." "I will communicate with the Go-

"O! Leave it all to me, friends," and
said he intended to do so.

so the brave schemer ordered some good wine,
they might drink to their country's suc-
and then he left the group in admiration
of his sentiments and liberality. They soon
began to talk of other things, and forgot the
Countess Alfredini, the spy residing in her
house, and the worthy man who had taken all
the trouble upon himself. This was exactly
what Don Giuseppe desired. He wished to
prevent them from making any investigation,
lest suspicion should fall upon himself.

Following day one of the party spoke in-
friend about the treacherous priest,
death of a good patriot in terra
d that the man was now living
tess Alfredini, and was, without
y in the pay of Austria. He said no
at his friend repeating it incidentally like-
, with a few additions, in the course of two days
it was reported confidently in the low quarters of
Venice, without any one being able to say where
the report originated, that there was a spy in the
Countess Alfredini's house.

A few days afterwards, several persons of
threatening air surrounded the house in which
the Countess resided. They were of plebeian
appearance, though not of the very lowest class.
Their eyes were fierce, their countenances in-
flamed with the anger that raged in their breasts.
At first no one in the house took any notice of
them, as the inmates had no reason for fear.
The numbers, however, continued to increase.
One whispered to another, "This is where the
Jesuitess lives," doubtless picturing to them-
selves a wrinkled Jezebel; "And there is a
priest here, an Austrian spy, who accused the

good Italian, and caused him to be executed at Lunaco." The rumour spread, and the numbers of the people increased. The chiefs of the tumult knew not how to proceed, whether to excite a commotion or to guard the doors only, so that no one could obtain either entrance or exit. The Signora degli Adorni, who lived near, was quickly informed of the circumstance by some one in the neighbourhood, aware that she was a friend of the Countess. She was dreadfully agitated on receiving the information; but this did not obscure her good sense, and her strength of mind was equal to every emergency. She ordered her gondola to be prepared instantly, and taking with her two gondoliers and four oarsmen, quickly set forth. The gondola flew like lightning; it bounded past the corners of the little Venetian canals with incredible celerity, and was conducted with such dexterity that it seemed gifted with human sense and counsel to avoid collisions and shocks. The gondola was flying along the grand canal so rapidly, the eye could scarcely follow it; the bomb-shells from the enemy's camp were falling around, but the noble woman passed through them without

a feeling of fear. She proceeded towards the railway bridge, encouraging the rowers, and promising them a handsome reward. She reached the fort of the bridge which was covered by the enemy's fire. In her gondola she wrote a few lines in pencil on her card. She gave orders to be rowed under an arch of the bridge, not from fear, but because at that moment she felt her life of great importance. Her faithful gondolier took the note to Francesco, whom he found undauntedly occupied in the works of repair, and in encouraging the artillerymen to answer the enemy's discharge. The man, unmindful of danger, ran to him and delivered the note, which contained these words, "Dear Fantoni, Amalia's house is surrounded by rioters, who desire to get Don Domenico into their hands as an Austrian spy.

"T. DEGLI A."

Francesco ran to the commander of the fort, explained the danger that menaced some innocent persons very dear to him, requested permission to go to them immediately, as he felt sure he could save them without any need of an armed force. The permission was accorded,

and the gondola flew back bearing Francesco and the Signora. All was accomplished in less time than the narration occupies.

Meanwhile the people around the Countess's residence grew more and more numerous. Among them were daring mendicants, bold-looking young men, and some of the very dregs of the populace, and there were also a few citizens. Dreadful imprecations were uttered, such as "Death to spies! banishment for female Jesuits!" Some cried, "Here lives an Austrian spy—a priest!" others, "Here is an old Jesuitess and her lover, the priest, the Austrian spy. Death to the enemies of the country!" Those who had a taste for fishing in troubled waters had abundant opportunity of satisfying their inclination here. Minds were mutually excited by inflammatory words, and urged to excess by growing numbers.

There were true spies of Austria among the crowd, but such men of course wore the mask of warm patriotism. They felt it their duty to be present to incite the mob for the good of the Austrian cause. In the excitement of any political crisis it is easy to lead the people to com-

mit excesses. They are never so outrageous as at the critical moment when liberty, purchased at the expense of blood and sacrifice, is on the point of being wrested from them. They then manifest the frenzy of desperation.

Some one in the crowd exclaimed, "We shall soon get hold of one spy, and we will make him pay the penalty for all." The cries and groans were dreadful. They began to batter the door—but it did not quickly yield, for it was barred within and cased with iron. They brought instruments to aid their blows; and their pick-axes and crow-bars seemed as if they would soon effect their purpose. Others ran to a neighbouring field, and fetched stones to demolish the windows, which quickly fell in, the glass reduced to powder. A few minutes longer and the house would have been invaded by the insane rabble. The principal door was already giving way and its hinges yielding, and there seemed no hope of escape. The civic guard ran to the spot, but seemed powerless against this vast assemblage, and many of the guard moreover felt little disposed to assist in saving a spy. The moment was most awful. We need

not attempt to describe the state of Amalia; the reader can easily imagine what it must necessarily be. The Priest of Rivalta, fortified by his consciousness of innocence, feared nothing, and awaited the result with undaunted courage, though it caused him intense pain to witness the fright of the poor Countess, who passed from one fainting-fit into another, and now screamed, now wept, now endeavoured to precipitate herself from the windows overlooking the canal at the back of the house.

Another moment and all would have been lost—but at that instant a man arrived in the most impetuous haste. He penetrated the crowd without fearing sticks, or pikes, or stones which might assail him either intentionally or accidentally. He was attired as an officer; his face glowed with anger and noble disdain, his eye was imposing, and his countenance severe. His appearance had great effect upon the crowd, who involuntarily opened their ranks to make way for him, struck by his noble bearing. He ascended the steps of the principal entrance, without any signs of fear, although against this door they were directing tremendous blows, any one

of which might have struck him, and put an end to his existence. But the blows ceased as soon as he showed his manly countenance. "Stop!" he shouted, "in the name of the country and of justice, stop!" The cry seemed to proceed from a stentorian breast. An angel must have thrown a miraculous strength into his voice. His face was impassible, though his breast heaved with powerful respiration,—neither from anger nor fear, but rather from anxiety about one dear to him—from anguish for Amalia's peril. "Stop, and listen to me," cried he again, and his voice was irresistible. "Venetians! good patriots! do you know me?"

"Yes, yes," shouted many voices, "it is Fantoni!"

"Will you believe what I tell you?"

"Yes, yes," they cried, "he is one of our best defenders."

"Well, I swear to you before that God, who sees all from on high, who is the disposer of our lot, and who vindicates the blood of the innocent—I swear by our own dear country, the man you wish to see dead, is one of the most gene-

rous-hearted of our brethren. If you do take his life, you will be like Cain, who shed guiltless blood."

"No, he is a spy," was uttered by some voices proceeding from real spies. One of these voices sounded familiar to Francesco, though he could not recall where he had heard it before.

"By the God above, who hears me at this moment, and can cut down the perjurer, I swear he is not a spy! I swear it by the head of my mother, by the salvation of my own soul, by our dear, dear country, he is no spy! This man left his own parish and all his comforts, and disguised himself as a driver of a cart to save me. He is the friend of my heart, the very dearest of all my friends—him whom I love best on earth, after my mother and the woman of my choice. He, a priest, took arms, and offered his manly breast as a shield to his friend, and fought like a lion to defend him from the Austrian dogs, two against six, with the danger of being surrounded by hundreds of them at any moment. He helped me through the midst of the Austrian soldiery like a brave man as he is. He lay with me, buried under the snow, at the

risk of having his limbs frozen, to aid me in escaping the talons of the Austrians, whose scouts were tracking us as the dogs track their game. This man is the idol of his parish, but he left it to save me. I have known him all my life, and he has never varied; he has always been the same great, good, and generous being. See, here am I before you, Venetians! Load me with chains, secure my person, throw me into a dungeon, I am ready to answer with my life—I will forfeit my head, if I do not speak the truth.”

“No, no; hurrah for Fantoni! long live his friend!” exclaimed some of the most generous, and a burst of cheers echoed through the crowd.

“But this priest lives with a Jesuitess. He is her lover,” cried the same voice that had before sounded familiar to Francesco’s ear, though he still could not recall where he had heard it before.

“Malediction on the infamous wretch who utters such execrable blasphemy! He dares not come forward and show himself, for he knows I would fall upon him, and trample him beneath my feet. The wretch is himself an Austrian spy! In the name of the country of

rous-hearted of our b , with lion-like
his life, you will be f whom this infer-
blood."

"No, he is a c him seize by the
voices proceedin e is no other than an
voices sounded im, and, by heaven, I
could not rec oes it half I possess—all

"By the ch ought to be dragged to
moment,

swear he d round, but no one could
of my r o had spoken. It was a priest,
by ou d no sooner said the words than
This d hid himself behind a pillar. He
fort any, though not by Francesco, but
to at he was the guilty person.

ve male Jesuit," Francesco continued,
ago, braved the wrath of Austria

er noble woman to save a patriot

ou. Her companion, her most inti-
ad, who aided her in saving me, is, like

es, a Venetian ; you all admire her, and
e the name of the Signora degli Adorni.

ow she heroically exposed herself to the
y's balls to summon me to rescue her friend.

ady whom that infamous wretch dared to call

s and the mistress of a priest, is an
of modesty and purity, and is the be-
ed of Francesco Fantoni."

"Hurra, hurra, Fantoni! hurra for his
bride!" cried a thousand voices with a burst of
frenzied admiration.

"Let us see the bride of the brave Fantoni,"
cried several. "Let us see her!" was the universal
cry; a cry of admiration, of repentance, of love
—one of those cries, springing from a thousand
hearts, which are omnipotent and irresistible.
"Let us see her!" cried the people, louder and
louder, and they became more and more excited,
until the desire of seeing her seemed to reach a per-
fect frenzy of enthusiasm. No man living could
have resisted the cry; Francesco was delighted,
as the shouting continued with augmented force,
"Let us see her!" "And the priest too,"
added some one. "Yes, the priest too—the
priest and the Countess." The door was still
closed, although much battered, and Francesco
had no hope of its being opened by the frightened
people within. He felt then at once in himself
the power of a giant—his arm seem nerved
with superhuman strength, and he aimed a blow

which made the door tremble; an athletic man gave another, another, and another, at the same moment, and the door shook and yielded. Francesco turned to the enthusiastic crowd, and made a sign, entreating to be heard. All were mute at once, as by the touch of the magnetic wire.

"My good Venetians," he said, "be calm! If you will not frighten the poor lady, I will bring her out on the balcony. I promise you to do so."

"Yes, yes, we all want to see her, and the Signora degli Adorni too."

"There is her gondola," said a boatman, who recognized the Adorni gondola in the canal which ran beneath the house, and some of them immediately rushed towards it. A cry was heard, "The Signora is in it, do not make so much noise! show her proper respect!"

"I will entreat of her to show herself," said another, with a rude air of gallantry.

"Yes, Tita, beg of her to come. Tell her we must see her too."

"Yes," said another, "we want to see her as well as the rest."

The Signora degli Adorni, looking rather pale, soon emerged from her boat. As she left it, a gentleman standing near, approached to offer her his hand. But she saw standing by, with embarrassed air, the poor Tita, who had volunteered to entreat her to come forth; and with the exquisite delicacy of a sensitive soul, she inclined her head in recognition of the gentleman's politeness, but extended her hand to poor Tita, by whom she was assisted to land. Then, taking his arm, conducted by him, she passed on to her friend's house. She walked with an air of modesty, but at the same time with dignity and ease. Not a sound was to be heard; moved by a feeling of respect, all raised their hats as she passed. She was more gratified by this sign of profound and respectful sympathy, than if she had been a queen. She ascended the steps, still holding Tita's arm, and, having reached the top, turned round, and, with admirable grace, slightly bowed towards the crowd. A loud and universal cry of enthusiasm burst forth, and she entered the house, left by Tita at the door, after bestowing upon him the price of a thankful smile. He closed the hal-

demolished door behind her, but at the same instant the door was reopened by her own hand, and left open. A noble and graceful act, which again excited the acclamations of the crowd. If there were many such women, men would become heroes indeed.

Another moment of silence and expectation, and then the enthusiastic shouts were renewed.

"We must see them all, all!" cried they, unceasingly. The windows of the balcony were opened, and then Francesco appeared, holding Amalia by the hand, pale, and with neglected attire and dishevelled hair. A sculptor might well have taken her as a model of a weeping beauty for the tomb of one of his heroes. The Signora degli Adorni came, and then was seen the strongly marked, manly, and benignly stern face of the priest, for whom the crowd at once felt a world of powerful and childlike sympathies, which must have gone to his heart, as in their own they loved him better than if he had been an Apollo.

An emotion of piety moved the hearts of the people, all uncovered their heads, and no sounds of applause were heard; but their

applause was more powerful than if it had made itself heard ; it was heartfelt.

“ Her emotion,” said Francesco, “ prevents my bride from exhibiting herself to you with smiling face and graceful air ; but she protests to you that your present demonstration of sympathy amply compensates for the grief she has experienced in seeing you led into error by the arts of some infamous wretch.”

One of the crowd, an uncultivated man, but a man of some spirit, said,

“ Signore, I speak in the name of all. We are extremely sorry for what has taken place. It is all the work of the Austrian spies, and not our fault, and we hope that this good lady will pardon us.”

With a gentle smile, Amalia turned her eyes, still filled with tears, and as by mesmeric attraction, while the people were applauding enthusiastically, she looked towards the corner of the square, and against a pillar, saw a figure that affected her, like an apparition. A man dressed in black, wearing a cloak, and three cornered hat, was standing with his eyes fixed upon hers, as with demoniacal attraction.

She uttered a cry, fainted, and was carried into the house, and so the drama finished.

The object which frightened her was Don Ginseppe, who in seeing her, forgot to keep himself concealed. He felt a return of love and hate more overwhelming than ever, and fixed his eye intently upon her, as if he would devour her with his look of longing, as if he would annihilate her by a glance of hate. In his furious intensity of spirit he forgot that he was hiding there, and that he ran the risk of being lost if he were seen. She was the only person who remarked his presence, and he retired, his heart a prey to unutterable bitterness.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HORRID MORAL MONSTERS, WHICH REND THE
SOUL THAT GENERATED THEM.

DON GIUSEPPE, sad, humble, his head cast down, his heart torn by a thousand torments, slowly returned to his chamber. Oh, how different from the time when first, full of life, and strength of will, and boldness, he nursed those infernal conceptions which had led to such fatal realities ! His early impulses were the children of sin and abomination, generated of corruption, which, whether disguised in flattering insidious mien, or displayed in all their grossness and horror, were yet all daring with youthful vigour, firm in self-confidence, and inflexibly pertinacious. Now, no less revolting are the conceptions generated by his mind, but more abominable, because in

their present deformity, the pretension to vigour belonging to youth is only sustained with the febrile effort of departing manhood, with the desperation of one who is indomitable in will, but impotent in rage, and is working his own death by his own ungoverned and irrepressible passions.

Don Giuseppe made vast efforts to recover his original spirit and energy. His heart uttered rending groans unheard by any living soul, but such as might be heard in the infernal regions and re-echoed with diabolical exultation. Nor can any human being continue to endure such exaggeration of grief and rage. He would not be mortal, but immortal, who could long bear such torments, and live. A consuming fire runs through his veins, exciting his feelings to an overwhelming desire for life and action, yet constraining his body to lie powerless in impotent apathy. Hallucinations rise before his mind in dire aspects of phantasms, of mysterious whirlwinds and intolerable confusions: it is a copy, but in the life, of the primæval chaos. A goad seems to be forcing his brain to conjure up infernal creations, disturbed, confused and shapeless.

Incomplete fancies hardly sprung to life, pass away as quickly as they are borne.

The man is tempted to believe he is dead and condemned, and that it is the fire of eternal torment which he feels within,—which causes this burning, this indefinable sensation of devouring anguish, of unnatural wasting of the members, of utter confusion of mind. If this be not death, he would that death should come quickly, for so to live is worse than death; this torment is worse than any that can follow life. When life is spent, the soul acquires force from the certainty of its impotence to endure its anguish. In life, to feel within himself this power, and to feel himself incapable of repentance, and abandoned by Him who could, if he would, excite him to it by his grace, but, moved by just indignation, refuses—oh, this is worse torture than that of the damned. No; the torments of Don Giuseppe are not physical, nor should we be faithful historians did we describe them as such; from a different source our pencil derives its colours to paint the torments of his soul. It deduces them from the abyss of man's moral nature, as horrid and deformed in despair, as it

is shining and beautiful in the hope that is the offspring of faith. Believe not, dear reader, that this picture is the effect of a fantastic imagination. We hear a voice within us which inspires us thus to represent the state of the wicked in the final conflict of his soul. The blessed of the earth will not comprehend us, but those who live in tears and grief will readily acquiesce in our sentiments. Grief has the privilege of inspiration.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BREATH OF THE TOMB CONSUMES THE
BODY, AND DESPERATION IS THE PORTION
OF THE SOUL.

A CALM has succeeded to the tremendous agitation, but it is the calm of destruction. The colour has fled from that cheek, and is succeeded by the pallor of the tomb. Fever has left the patient prostrate, after enduing him with factitious strength. A deathlike rigidity benumbs his limbs, which seem suddenly elongated from their excessive attenuation, deprived as they are of the principle of life. The air, which is charged with malignant spirits, he inhales with rabid thirst of life, and in the suffocation and oppression of his troubled breast, the infection is drunk in copious draughts. The monster,

the messenger of death, enters the apartment of the human monster, ferociously seizes his throat, and fixes his deadly claws in his breast, inflicting spasmodic throes of unutterable anguish. The livid hue of destruction overspreads his face suddenly, and the impalpable monster laughs with infernal mockery over the human monster. The one is the CHOLERA, the other his victim, Don Giuseppe. His eyes are glassy, their brightness betokening life lost. Decomposition seems to have commenced. Death is impatiently awaiting his prey. He regards the work of his ministers, and a laugh of approbation issues from his hollow jaws. The human monster hears the laugh, and feels it freeze his soul. That dreadful skeleton form is ready to take possession of him, and he, confounding it with himself, feels they two are blended into one.

The human monster upturns his fell eyes with the desolation of despair in his soul, mentally utters a malediction, and awaits the approaching moment of his destruction.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHICH PRESENTS AN ANTITHESIS OF THE
FOREGOING.

THE Countess was reclining upon a sofa, still in a state of confusion, between fear and delight. Never in her life had she experienced such terror—never had her beloved appeared to her so handsome, so noble, or so great. She felt the anguish she had undergone a thousand times compensated by the thought that she had been saved by him, and by the gratifying proof of the superiority of his noble and generous soul to that of men in general, and the dominion he could exercise over others. Her heart was no longer a rebel against her faith. The perfecting of her faith was the work of a moment. She felt within herself the mighty change, and she

rejoiced and rendered praises to God. Though previously the sight of Don Giuseppe was as alarming to her as a superhuman appearance ; from the moment the change was operated in her soul she no longer feared him, except as the good, who confide in God, must always fear and shun the evil. She saw him no longer as a priest, but simply as a man ; and if as a priest she feared him, as a man she feared him not. Her friend was near, regarding her with the eye of a sister, not speaking, but reading her soul as her sweet eye grew gradually more and more serene. Francesco had returned to the post of duty with the intention of asking a day's leave of absence to make investigations respecting his wretched enemy, whose recent conduct towards Amalia had just been made known to him, and of whose mysterious appearance that morning Amalia had told him. He could now unravel the mystery of the voice which had struck him, among all the rest, at the moment of the tumult.

But he soon found that there was no cause for prosecuting his enquiry, since his enemy was seized by the cholera ; for he thought that

the human enmity must end at the thresholds of the grave, and must not go beyond it.

Amalia and her friend learning of the danger in which the life of the wicked priest was placed, ardently prayed for that departing soul. A prayer more sincere, or more disinterested never ascended to heaven.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PHANTASM REVEALED TO THE EYES OF THREE
STRONG MEN.

SINCE that memorable day a month had elapsed. Venice, the last of the Italian cities to hold out, found her finances exhausted, her munitions of war spent, the Cholera raging with increased fury, the city desolated by the enemy's furious fire. The Hungarians were already subjugated ; and Venice having no hope of assistance from without, made an honourable capitulation. Not a single life was demanded by the Austrians. The emigration was vast, and Francesco necessarily found himself included among the emigrants. In the state of his country, he felt that he could not consistently attempt to attain the realization of his felicity.

AND THE PRIEST.

Amalia, it was arranged, should after a time rejoin him at Paris accompanied thither by an uncle and by her friend, there to celebrate the marriage. The mutual tenderness of the lovers could not overcome their sense of delicacy, and they preferred to delay their union while they experienced such deep concern for the fate of their country.

A few days previously to the entrance of the Austrians into Venice, at nine o'clock in the morning, a man of noble appearance was in the church of Santa Maria Formosa, accompanied by two persons of vulgar airs. These three had come to witness Mass. The officiating priest was to officiate for the first time after a severe illness, in which he had been very near death. At length he came out from the sacristy. He was very tall and excessively thin, his face perfectly white and so shrunk that his cheeks were quite sunken; his eyes were almost buried in their cavities, though their pupils retained the powerful brilliancy of life. With slow step, he advanced, as if he had scarcely strength to support himself. He looked like a spectre who had just emerged, by means of enchantment

from the tomb in order to fulfil some mysterious act of abomination on earth. The three spectators were hidden behind a pillar and could see without being seen. One of the two men, who appeared to belong to the lower classes, said to the gentleman wearing the air of a citizen, "By the Virgin Mary! there is no doubt about it: that is the man, the very same, that was with me at the 'Osteria del Gambero,' to watch for you, Sir, although he looks like his own shadow."

"That will do," said the gentleman: then, turning to the other, "my friend," said he, "do you think you ever saw that priest before?"

"To be sure I have; although he is only the skeleton of the man I saw before. I have not the least hesitation in saying that if it is not he, it is the shadow of the man that came that night to the public house and spoke of the priest, the Austrian spy, concealed in the house of the Jesuitess."

"That will do," said the gentleman, whom the reader will already have discovered; and Francesco and the ex-chief of the Austrian *sbirri*, and the Patriot who had conversed with

Don Guiseppe at the public house, when he aimed so dastardly a blow at the priest of Rivalta and Amalia — all left the church unobserved without waiting to hear mass.

The chief of the sbirri had been imprisoned for a month in consequence of his want of success in capturing Francesco Fantoni, and then degraded from his post to be a common sbirro again. Of course he little approved of the punishment and degradation, and found means to escape to Venice. He presented himself to Francesco, and sought his protection, on the ground that the sympathy he had felt for him at the moment he was to have arrested him in front of the inn on the road to Lunaco, was the cause of his escape from death. Francesco, finding no reason to disbelieve his statements, promised him protection and provided him with sustenance. The other man, touched by Francesco's address, on the day of the riot at the house of Alfredini, went to him and narrated the history of the incognito, himself undoubtedly an Austrian spy, who had so artfully insinuated among the patriots the false accounts respecting the priest and the Countess Alfredini. From

the description given by the man, in conjunction with the hostile voice, sounding so familiar to his ear in the midst of the tumult, and from the apparition beheld by Amalia from the balcony, Francesco felt no doubt that it was Don Giuseppe who was the cause of all the mischief; and after hearing of his recovery, and having the communication received from the two men, he decided to proceed further in the affair. We have seen the result. All his deep laid schemes were at length discovered.

The reader can but admire the ways of Providence which through such various and natural means, and all so unforeseen, permitted the final exposure of the machinations of one man, unassisted by accomplices, and all contrived with the most extraordinary ability and prudence, to be at length exposed.

The priest believed himself totally unsuspected, and at the last few days of the defence continued to profess himself a warm patriot, as far as his illness permitted. Francesco, for this period, allowed him to proceed unmolested. When the patriots quitted Venice, Don Giuseppe, as one of them, thought well to leave too. His

proud soul disdained to wait for the Austrian recompense, and besides, he intended, when fully restored to health, to endeavour, under the mask of his patriotism, to find opportunity yet for revenge.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE GIANT WHO BOLDLY WARRED AGAINST
HEAVEN IS CAST DOWN.

FOR some weeks Venice had again been under the Austrian yoke, and many of her valiant sons were scattered over the earth, augmenting the formidable mass who suffer heat and cold, hunger and thirst, privations, contempt and even contumely for having risked their lives in the service of their country, for having exposed their breasts to the bayonet of the tyrant to secure the liberty of their loved native land. We do not intend to narrate their history which might occupy volumes of the most affecting details; at present another story of a sufficiently melancholy character invites us to its conclusion.

We are at Paris. Here are assembled patriots from Venice as well as from various other countries. A national banquet is given. The invitations are issued by the chiefs of the Italian exiles, and the guests represent the fraternal alliance of the Italian States. Here are the loftiest celebrities among the patriots who have held rank in the revolutions, and also the obscure who have been prodigal of their lives for their country's sake. Though now poor and dejected, a noble and lofty heart still beats in their bosom, their minds are refined by their misfortunes, and they derive strength from the conviction, that, while suffering humiliation and poverty, they are greater than the most honoured and opulent of the world.

One priest alone is amongst them. Amid their numerous invitations they could find but a single priest worthy of joining their ranks. There might be other generous men, exiles like himself, who wore like him the priestly robe—but by the arbitrary will of the providers of the feast, there is but this solitary specimen in this assembly of brave men. He is a brave priest and one of our acquaintance. It is not the

Priest of Rivalta, though he is one of the bravest, for he is not in exile, having returned to his parish unmolested by the Austrians. He has escaped persecution, for it has been shown that he opposed the authorities, not from political motives but from private affection to save a friend dear to him. Of such anomalies, occurring at this time, the Austrian Government presents several specimens, using unlooked-for clemency in many cases, and indemnifying itself for a single act of forbearance by a thousand deeds of cruelty. So that our guest is not the Priest of Rivalta, who, very likely at this moment is conversing with the Countess Belfiore of their common friends, whom, for a long time to come, they may not be permitted to see. Who, then, can this priest be of our acquaintance, so generous and liberal that he is worthy to be among the guests? He is no less a personage than Don Giuseppe.

He had partially recovered from his recent illness when Venice yielded, and although wasted, pale, and weak, he felt himself disposed, on the entrance of the Austrians, to follow the fate of the patriots. We need not be surprised, then,

to find him at Paris as an exile, and taking part in the patriotic banquet. When all were assembled, however, he felt an uneasy sensation, a sort of melancholy presentiment on finding himself the only priest. His evil conscience rendered him timorous: still he took courage from the reflection that nothing could be known against him, and he was unaware that Francesco Fantoni was in Paris. But Francesco had arrived secretly, and was the originator of the banquet. He had employed a friend to undertake the management of it at his expense, regardless of cost, with the injunction to keep his name concealed. The priest was therefore in ignorance of the fact which ought so highly to have gratified his self-complacency, had he known it, that the banquet was given in his honour. But no! humble as he was, instead of nourishing any feeling akin to pride, had he been aware of it, he would have prostrated himself to the earth, and have entreated that it might not be. But in ignorance, and consequently with blind confidence, he took his place among the rest. Looking around and seeing none but unknown or friendly faces, he tranquillized his mind, and

prepared to pass a quiet, agreeable evening. Everything promised well, but he had failed to notice one cover laid for an absent guest directly opposite to himself.

The viands had scarcely been placed upon the table, when Francesco made his appearance. At this apparition the most violent tremor pervaded the priest's frame. He cursed his fate and trembled from head to foot. This late arrival might be accidental, or it might be intentional—but he feared it was in some way connected with himself. He thought of rising immediately, hoping to retire quietly and unobserved; but it was a difficult matter to effect, and he hesitated, and resolved to face the danger, hoping that there was none.

Francesco seats himself and casts his eyes with such an air of good-natured indifference upon his opposite neighbour, that Don Giuseppe feels things begin most auspiciously for him. "Everything has been forgotten, it is clear," thought he, "since my illness—but I have not forgotten that cursed blow." Although his breast was raging; with the profound dissimulation habitual to him, he thought that it

would be well and expedient to bow to Francesco first.

“ Dear, how singular !” exclaimed Francesco, “ that Don Giuseppe Lanzini should honour this select company by his presence. Companions in misfortune, I presume ?”

This interrogation was uttered with a dramatic sneer, partially veiled by an air of quiet civility, and would have disconcerted the boldest and most impudent blackleg—nor did it fail to have its effect upon Don Giuseppe. There are moments when the most self-possessed and dignified are taken unawares, and feeling how sorry a figure they make, would give worlds to regain their composure. This was precisely the case with Don Giuseppe at that moment, and he answered, stammering, and in spite of his efforts, betraying his confusion—

“ Yes, sir,—that is, I believe so,—I mean, that if it were not so I should not be here.”

“ Well, really ! water springs where we least expect it !” said Francesco, who took advantage of his confusion to put him still more off his guard.

“ My actions,” he answered, recovering his

wanted confidence, "the sacrifices I have made for my country are not unknown."

"Is it possible?—I should never have believed it—I am truly glad to hear it. Don Lanzini," said Francesco, with a truly Arcadian simplicity, which formed a strong contrast to the grave and sarcastic expression of his eye. Don Giuseppe cast a furious glance at his tormentor. He remained silent, however, and continued to eat, while Francesco turned to his neighbour and talked of other matters. Don Giuseppe hoped the storm had passed, and that for the present the worst was over.

The evening was far advanced; they had eaten, and drunk, and talked on a thousand different topics, all respecting their own dear country—exiles have no other concern. Don Giuseppe kept perfectly silent, hoping that all would pass off well for him.

Suddenly, however, during one of those general pauses which will occur in the largest assemblies, with clear and loud, though unaffected voice, Francesco began—

"Don Lanzini"—it is necessary to observe that this union of the family name with "Don,"

presents, according to the case, an indescribable mixture of respect and mockery—"Don Lanzini," repeated Francesco, still louder, because the priest, though hearing the first appeal, which penetrated his heart like a spear, appeared not to notice it. "Don Lanzini," however, at the second summons, raised his eyes, recovered his spirit, and looked at the speaker with a fierce air of tacit defiance, without uttering a word.

"Why do you retain that coat, good patriot and brave man as you are?" said Francesco, with a slightly bitter tone of sarcasm, "that coat which is the livery of perfidy and treason?"

"Because my opinion differs from yours, Signor Fantoni," said he, with some degree of confidence. "Priests may be patriotic, and I am not ashamed of my coat, which I wear from conviction."

"I applaud your principles," said his adversary, in the same tone, "and commend and admire them greatly."

The priest assumed an air of indifference and contempt for his approbation. "I commend and admire them much; but experience has shown me the contrary side. It is a rare

exception to find a priest like you, Don Lanzini."

"I cannot agree with you, Signor Fantoni," said he sullenly.

"Your reply does honour to humanity."

This cutting satire was understood by no one but its object, whose eyes shot forth flames of concentrated wrath and detestation.

"At all events, personally, I have no reason to speak well of priests, and on that account may be prejudiced against them; but in this particular I will trust your just and impartial judgment. I will narrate to you the history of a priest. It is a truly sad and horrible tale, to which I am sure this respectable assembly of patriots will condescend to give their attention."

"Yes, yes," repeat the few already prepared, who are men of authority, and "yes, yes," repeat the others, following their example, and promising themselves a capital scene.

"I am here, in an assemblage of patriots, as a patriot and not as a judge," answered the unfortunate priest, with livid lip.

"You are the most competent judge, and must not refuse," said Francesco with a tone of command and menace, which, though scarcely

remarked by the rest, was all-powerful upon the soul of Don Giuseppe. His heart misgave him, but he felt compelled to remain quiet and listen. "You must give your judgment, or else you meanly confess your cause lost."

To the others this seemed a curious dispute, and they began to feel interested in it, and maintained a profound silence. Francesco resumed—

"I loved a girl with all the ardour and enthusiasm of first love. She was beautiful, and good, and innocent, but, for her misfortune, she was devout, and looked up to the priests as being little short of God. So had she been taught in the convent. A priest was chaplain in the house with this poor dove, who resided with her aged grandmother. The chaplain—a priest!—became enamoured of this angel; and what did he do, to gain his ends, but make me appear an unbeliever in the eyes of the poor girl? and she, though returning my love, overcome by religious terrors, was driven by the wily priest into marrying an imbecile, infirm idiot, with a title prefixed to his name, and the crafty priest induced that poor husband to take him into his house as chaplain."—

"Your story Signor Fantoni, is not the least interesting, and you may close it here at once," cried the priest, his breast heaving with torture.

"No, no, go on," cried the others.

"Signor Judge," answered Fantoni coldly, "have patience; in a little while my story will only be too interesting even for you."

Don Giuseppe bit his lip till the blood flowed. He had no choice, however, but to listen in silence. He cursed his stars, and held his peace.

"Incredible were the arts of the priest to torment his victim with religious fears, in order to make her his own. She, however, derived strength from virtue, and in it found peace of mind, although in the deep recesses of her heart lay her first love unsubdued. My despair, borne for years, cannot be described. Oppressed by grief, my life became an insupportable load to me.

"At length, by chance, I saw the angelic woman. Her look, though serene, betrayed her affection. It had upon me the effect of an admonition, and made me a new man. From that moment I exerted all the strength of my faculties for the good of my country, which I had ever loved.

“ In the meanwhile some years passed, in which I lived almost always abroad. During that period this priest exerted every kind of moral cruelty on the morbid conscience of the poor lady.

“ I will pass over how I wrote a book hateful to the ecclesiastical and political authority ; how, by unknown means, in which the priest had certainly a share, I was discovered as its author ; how two generous ladies, my beloved and another, by the hand of Providence, came to know I was to be arrested ; and, having masked themselves, being Carnival time, succeeded in finding me out, and warned me of the imminent danger ; nor will I detain you to describe how the priest discovered, through a servant, that they were to go out masked ; how he, masked too, followed them unobserved ; how he spied us without succeeding to overhear us, which, if he could, would have been my ruin ; how at last I discovered him, and, the ladies having left, I followed him and struck him. It suffices to say that when he received the notice of my flight, feigning ignorance of the name of the fugitive before the unhappy woman, burst into such a

hypocritical fit of fury against the infernal author of the book, and the accomplices of his escape, that he filled her bosom with unutterable terror, believing herself lost for ever.

“Meanwhile,” continued Fantoni, “Pius IX. was elected Pope. The deluded Italians, in their enthusiasm, believed he was sent of God. For some months the lady whom I had loved from my childhood had been left a widow by her infirm and imbecile husband. The priest was removed from her house by the advice of her bosom friend, the Signora degli Adorni, a lady held in the highest veneration among the Venetian patriots; yet he occasionally visited his victim, who was still unsuspecting. At this time foolish people were believing that the Pope would abolish the celibacy of the priests; and this infamous priest, surprising the lady in her own apartment, made it a pretext to make her an abominable declaration. He said all that an impious miscreant, a desperado, or a madman, could say. He resorted to the foulest violence to overcome her. He closed her mouth that she should not cry, holding her in his grasp, and God alone saved the poor woman from the

peril. At length she succeeded in uttering a cry for help ; her household heard her, and she was saved by a miracle.

“ This is what I have suffered from a priest. What do you say of this priest, Signor Judge?”

All were silent. The priest was as colourless as death. He trembled, but he raised himself erect, and stood up as if defying his adversary. The guilty one was at length clearly recognized by all present, and each waited anxiously for the conclusion of the exciting scene. The Judge did not reply to the question of the accuser, and Francesco repeated it in a tone of voice, loud, full, and inflexible, which struck on the heart of all. The priest thought to himself, “ this is the conclusion, he can know no more, and I am still safe.” Emboldened by this security, his pallor was succeeded by the scarlet tinge of wrath ; his eye glanced defiance ; his voice was again firm, and he said—

“ The Judge replies. Many of the assertions are stated, but not proved, and the greater part of them seem doubtful. But granted even that all were true, *the Judge pronounces* that it was all the fault of love ; and that as to the affair of

the book, the only part of the accusation which can charge perfidy on the priest, nothing is shown."

"Fewer words—Signor Judge!—the *sentence*!" cried Francesco, more peremptorily than before.

"The sentence," replied he, with the same haughtiness, "is that much is said, and little proved; and that if even all were proved, the faults of this priest are attributable to love. The world is accustomed to pardon such errors in him who has the opportunity of gratifying his passions; far more ought it to overlook them in a priest, who is excluded from all human affections, and in the most unnatural way deprived of human solace."

"Don Lanzini," said the young man, in quiet and solemn tones, "you have given a *wise judgment*, leaving uncondemned the wretch who violates hospitality, who effects the misery of a girl, who reduces a young man of honour to despair, who, to crown his infamy, breaks out to a most outrageous insult which the most execrable ruffian can ever attempt on a noble and virtuous woman. But I do not oppose your judgment; it is that of a *priest*, and must

be wise," said he, sarcastically. "With regard to the priest in question, however, all is not told yet, and you must be good enough yet to listen a little longer—Signor Judge!—and then give your judgment."

Here the priest felt inexpressible terror. He turned his eye towards the door, as if to measure the distance and calculate the possibility of escape. Francesco observed the glance, and burst into one of those fits of laughter which Don Giuseppe had previously felt to be so tremendous. Fantoni continued—

"Now, this infamous priest Signor Judge!—nourished the desire of vengeance, because he had failed in his wicked designs. In order to ruin me he turned spy, and betrayed his country. He feigned himself a liberal, received confidential missions from the Government of Venice to the provinces then recovered by the Austrians. By his means, one Venetian messenger was captured. In disguise he waited at an inn, where he was to point me out to a company of Austrian *sbirri*, when I was expected to pass that way on a political mission. I passed, he discovered me to the chief, and it was the

hand of Providence alone which saved me. The sbirro had pity on me, hesitated to follow me, and I escaped."

"The proofs, the proofs!" cried the priest, as if maddened. "All calumny, nothing but calumny!" and many present were disposed to believe that the accusations must be groundless.

"The proofs? Well, here it is," said Francesco, firmly. "Let the witness appear before the judge."

The witness, the *sbirro* himself, appeared instantly, entering upon the summons.

"Here is the sbirro, Signor Judge!"—

The judge fixed his eye on the man, who was attentively regarding him, and visibly trembled. He, however, looked at his enemy with an air of defiance.

Fantoni went on. "I, having so miraculously escaped, this priest could not rest without planning fresh acts of perfidy. A priest whom he had known from his infancy, noble, generous, and the dearest friend of my heart, learned, providentially, that I was threatened with being surprised by the sbirri in a certain spot. He left

his parish in disguise, fought for me like a lion, and conducted me safe to Venice. He could not return to his parish, because, if taken, he would have been shot. At Venice he resided in the house of a noble lady, the victim of the other priest. She had been a widow more than a year, and was betrothed to me. And now what does the priest do? He insinuates among some brave patriots, that a priest, an Austrian spy, is living as the lover of the lady, who is a Jesuitess. The people arose in tumult, and attacked her house. The principal door was almost forced in by the popular fury. The priest would have been ill-treated, and perhaps massacred, and what would have become of my poor bride, I know not—had I not been timely advised of her danger. I exposed myself to the fury of the incensed people, harangued them, and changed their furious wrath into enthusiastic admiration.”

Here he paused, and looked at the priest, who, with clenched hands, set teeth, and burning eyes, stood immovable as a stone.

“Signor Judge!—why do you not call for the proofs? Here is the second witness.” At the door appeared the man who had conversed with

Don Giuseppe when in disguise at the meeting of the patriots.

"This brave man was among those who heard the calumny, and he at first believed it, but he declared to me afterwards from whom it originated."

It was a solemn and tremendous spectacle. *The judge* stood like a baited bull, his face flaming and distorted. Everybody now knew that the priest was the guilty man.

A cry of indignation rose from all parts of the hall, and re-echoed in the heart of the unhappy wretch like the howl of a band of demons. He raised his head, cast a defying glance around, then looked at his enemy. Francesco regarded him not with an air of triumph, nor of satisfaction, but with the impassible look of the judge who punishes unmoved by any feeling of hate. This look seemed utterly to madden the culprit. He turned blind with rage, and extended his hand, and grasped a table-knife, with which he was about to throw himself upon Francesco. Those near him, seized him, disarmed him, and held him back.

"Malediction upon the wretch born for my perdition!" raved he, foaming at the mouth. A fresh cry arose.

"If you are not a cowardly wretch you will measure swords with me," cried he.

"Fool! measure swords with you! with whom? with an assassin, with a spy, with a *priest*? my life is consecrated to my country, and is dear to me because it is valuable to others. What is your life that you should care to preserve it?"

"If you do not accept my challenge, you are a coward," cried the maniac. "We cannot both live, one of us must end the life of the other."

At these words he heard a laugh of scorn around him. All saw the absurdity of such a challenge. Francesco raised his voice, and begged for silence again for a few minutes, and silence was obtained.

"I beg of you, gentlemen, to make no demonstration against this man. He was not a traitor to his country, but only made use of treason in order to ruin me and those dear to me. Vengeance is my right, I am the offended party, and it devolves upon me to execute it. I had devised the mode of revenging myself. I had intended to bring his victim here to exhibit before him that lovely face whose beauty is enhanced

by recent suffering. I wished to show him his victim, radiant with happiness, after all the anguish he has caused her—to exhibit her to him on the point of crowning her felicity and mine by the union of our lot. Before you all, in her presence, I had hoped to put him to shame. But she herself entreated me to desist from my plan. She said that for a woman, it would be too cruel an act thus to lead this man in triumph; that we ought to exercise Christian charity towards him. So much virtue overcame me, and I gave up the idea of conducting her hither to confront him. The only vengeance I take, Giuseppe Lanzini, is to announce that to-morrow the Countess Amalia Alfredini will be the wife of Francesco Fantoni.”

A roar of rage, which rather resembled that of a wild beast than of a man, escaped from the throat of Don Giuseppe.

“Leave us instantly, wicked wretch. The punishment that man can inflict, you have now received. Repent, and God will be merciful to you. Repent and your sins will be forgiven.”

“Repent! Simpleton! I only repent that I did not succeed in effecting your ruin; but I shall not always fail.”

“Quit the place,” cried Francesco, indignantly; “leave us this instant, wretch, and carry away with you the recollection of your iniquities.”

“Turn him out,” cried the guests. “Out with the priest!” and the priest casting an indefinable glance of scorn around, slowly walked away. He left Paris the same night, and it was afterwards said that he had united himself to a company of Jesuits, to assist in spreading misery over the earth. The Jesuits that day certainly made a grand acquisition to their ranks!

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

WHICH THE FAIR READER MAY SAFELY PERUSE
IN THE SILENCE OF NIGHT, WITHOUT FEAR
OF TROUBLED DREAMS.

IN the evening after the utter discomfiture of Don Giuseppe, Francesco and Amalia were together in a room at the hotel where the latter was staying. Her uncle and the Signora degli Adorni were out, making some of the nuptial preparations. Amalia was seated by her lover. In the face of each a perceptible change had been wrought in the lapse of the last few years, so marked by trial and suffering ; but both were still strikingly beautiful. She was the Amalia of a few years earlier in the expression of goodness and innocence, with the addition of that interesting air which trials sustained with unwearied virtue, and angelic sweetness, never fail to confer.

Francesco was the same as ever, only still

nobler. That resolute air which gives such decision to manly beauty, had rendered his expression somewhat severe, though he still retained his gentleness of manner. His eye possessed still greater power, though its effect was not less pleasing. His forehead seemed to have grown more majestic from the accumulation of noble thoughts which continually exercised his mind. The scene at the banquet had left a slight cloud on his countenance, an almost imperceptible contraction, indicating that his mind was scarcely yet calmed since the recent tempest.

He was seated close to Amalia, holding her hand in his, and, with a loving, intense look, regarding her in silence. She returned his gaze with subdued and tender admiration, her eyes swimming in ineffable sweetness.

After the lapse of a few moments, with the most touching voice that could proceed from woman's lips, she said,

"My Francesco, you are not happy. Your look speaks to me of unbounded love, but it also tells me that something disturbs your soul. To-morrow shall I not be yours for ever? Shall I not be the tender, loving companion of your

life? Tell, oh tell, your promised bride, tell your Amalia, the trouble that disturbs your soul. Who can feel so great solicitude to mitigate your griefs?"

"No, sweet one, I have no grief of any kind, but the excess of my felicity seems to oppress me. I can scarcely believe in its reality, and almost fear that I am dreaming, or under the influence of a charming illusion."

"Oh! fear not, your cup of happiness is really full, if the possession of Amalia can render you happy. I am yours, yours for ever, yours devotedly heart and soul. To-morrow I shall be yours in the sight of God and man, united by a bond approved by heaven."

"But, my love, shall I be able to render you happy?" asked Francesco.

A gentle smile, expressive of unbounded faith, overspread her lips, which for an instant, with charming confidence, were pressed to his, and she murmured,

"Ah! yes, my Francesco, happy as woman can be on earth; happy in your love, happy in the pride of being yours."

"But I fear, my soul's treasure, that I should not render you as happy as you deserve; though

if an unlimited, ever-enduring love can make you happy, you will be so. I love you as never man loved before—yet I fear that my love will not be such as is due to a loving woman. Look at my brow. Grief has graven lines there which can never be effaced. My lip can never smile on you with the full joyous smile of an ardent lover in his first years of hope, of love, and felicity. Mine will be, though unspeakably tender, the smile of a saddened heart. I shall be devoted to you as deeply as a man can be to a woman he adores—but my devotion will be grave, serious, and monotonous, like that of one who has passed through severe trials, which have embittered the springs of his existence, and extinguished the light of gaiety in his soul.”

At this tender and melancholy confession, she took both the hands of her lover in her own, and looked at him for a moment, with a smile the most winning, and the most significant of confidence and love that ever graced the lips of woman.

“ See, my only love ! Look at my countenance ; all the light joyousness of thoughtless youth has fled. Look at my forehead ; here too are the traces of years of profound suffering.

Listen to my voice, which from the long struggle of my soul has acquired tones of sadness. See my smile, it is as serious and melancholy as it is loving. My eye has lost the serene clearness of girlish gaiety, and is become grave from habitual grief and weeping. Look at the paleness of my cheek—and think if I can love my Francesco less because he will not lead his bride to scenes of gaiety and folly, and deafen her with the clamours of the world. A retired spot among meadows and woods, to my eyes will be peopled with mysterious beings speaking to my soul, as to yours, of heavenly things, and we shall hold converse with them in unity of sentiment. Nature will address her harmonies to our hearts, and we, in the delight of our life, shall together listen to her master-tones, and yield praises to our Creator. Dear to our ears will be the song of the birds and the murmur of the brook. The sighing of the zephyr will be sweeter to us than the most elaborate notes of art. The light of the sun, of the moon, and the stars, the variegated mantle of nature with her woods, meadows, valleys and forests, will teach us to despise the poor splendours of theatres and balls, show and decoration, and artificial sounds and

songs. We, instead of listening to the trifles of the world, shall hear the pure and simple language of nature's own children, and by the exercise of kindness, shall give a variety to their tones, changing the sad and complaining to the joyous and festive."

"Enough, enough, my angel! Say no more. I feel as if I could no longer stand against the waves of joy that inundate my heart, and completely oppress it; say no more," said the enraptured young man, raising his eyes supplicatingly towards her face. "My heart melts with happiness; the delight of my soul overcomes me. Say no more, if you will not see me die at your feet from the excess of love and happiness."

The sweetest of women closed the mouth of her lover with the gentle kiss of love, and their hearts' communings were interrupted by the return of their friends.

The day following, the Countess Alfredini, *née* Marchioness Amalia Fossombroni, was simply Signora Amalia Fantoni.

THE END.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

ON

SIGNOR VOLPE'S THREE TRAGEDIES,
"LA TRADITA DEGLI AMIDEI;" "ELFRIDA (Part I.) O LA
VENDETTA;" "ELFRIDA (Part II.) O IL TRADIMENTO."

Times.

"The heroine (in *La Tradita degli Amidei*) is not Cecilia Donati, the Helen of the Florentines, nor the mother—the artful Madonna who dazzled Buondelmonte with the fatal charms of her child—but the deserted Beatrice degli Amidei, whose sorrows are elaborately portrayed."

Globe.

"This pretty little volume contains three Italian tragedies.. This tragedy (*Elfrida*, Part I.) contains undoubtedly the elements of one of the grandest tragedies, and is very well treated by Signor Volpe. The Italianesque passion and rapidity of thought and feeling give a peculiar character to this play.... Signor Volpe's dramatic power is good, and his poetry is terse and forcible."

Spectator.

"These tragedies are printed in a neat little volume, and they will be found worth perusal as specimens of the quasi-classical school of Italian drama."

Morning Herald.

"These pieces are graceful and pleasing. They ought to prove very acceptable to students of the Italian language in England, and the author deserves thanks for having performed the somewhat unusual service of embodying our national traditions in the beautiful language of Italy."

Englishwoman's Review.

"The poetry of these dramas is pronounced by the highest authorities of the press and of literature, both English and Italian, to be the most brilliant and classical in style."

Standard.

"We have received a most attractive volume of Italian tragedies. . . . We are following in the wake of those, who, from country, taste, study, and reputation, are fully qualified to judge, when we give it as our opinion that the tragedies in question are of a high order, both as regards poetic talent and dramatic conception. . . . These graceful, yet vigorous productions of Signor Volpe's pen, must inevitably make a vivid impression upon those whose linguistic attainments qualify them to enjoy them."

Evening Herald.

"At this period, the announcement of a new tragedy is an event in the literary world, so that the appearance of three tragedies, varied in character, and possessing real merit, takes us by surprise; and the bold attempt of a hitherto unknown author, awakens a hope that we may see on the Italian stage some new production worthy of a more poetical age."

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS
ON
SIGNOR VOLPE'S WORK,
MEMOIRS OF AN EX-CAPUCHIN,
OR
SCENES OF MODERN MONASTIC LIFE.

Petites Affiches de Londres.

"Les Memoires d'un Ex-Capucin sont un service immense rendu a la moralité publique. . . . un des ouvrages les plus curieux, les plus consciencieux, les plus utiles, que dans notre spécialité d'examiner l'esprit des autres, nous ayons eu depuis long temps l'occasion de signaler."—Oct. 15th, 1854.

Literary Gazette.

"The narrative has every internal appearance of being a genuine and faithful history of real life, and, as such, affords a striking picture of modern Italian society, and an instructive illustration of the religious system by which southern Europe is kept in mental degradation and slavery. . . . it is admirably written. . . .
Oct. 22nd.

Morning Advertiser.—(Second Review.)

"..... a book is published which exposes to public view the inner and real working of monasteries, in more graphic and startling colour than the world ever saw before. It is, in truth a most amazing and overwhelming volume to read."—Oct. 19th.

British Banner.

"The volume is much calculated to promote the interest of true religion. The work gives the completest view that has yet been presented of modern monasticism."—Oct. 26th.

Critic.

"..... It is a book exceedingly interesting, and bearing upon its face a strong impress of truth."—Nov. 29th.

Daily News.

"It is a fearful record of degradations to which human nature may be subject, when under the unchecked control of men brutified by superstition, out of a number of details which are as horrible as they are grotesque."—Oct. 25th.

Protestant Alliance.—(Monthly Letter, No. 10.)

"Most interesting, as exhibiting the fearful discipline exercised in training the army of Rome."—Oct. 1st. 1853.

Bell's Weekly Messenger.

"..... The language, divested altogether of acrimony, furnishes a series of most exciting illustrations of the apophthegma that 'truth is stranger than fiction.'"—Oct. 1st.

Eclectic Review.

"In our ignorance of the internal working of Popery, we have imagined that it had shared in the general progress of thought and feeling. We fear, however, that such a notion must be abandoned. It is with reluctance that we admit this conclusion, but these revelations recently afforded leave us no alternative."

Christian Times.

"The Ex-friar is Signor Crespi. The author of this book is his friend, Signor Volpe. Crespi furnished the materials, and Volpe wrote them into shape..... the bold grouping of the drama before us commands attention."—Nov. 25th.

Christian Family Record. (Magazine.)

"This is a marvellous tale..... We think the publication of his volume is well-timed, when apologies for monastic institutions are issuing from the press."

Protestant Magazine.

"..... In the Memoirs of an Ex-Capuchin there is a tone of rue piety."—Dec.

Tait's Edinburgh Magazine.

"This work is one of considerable value, and all the more so, as it is evidently free from all malice and invective."—Nov.

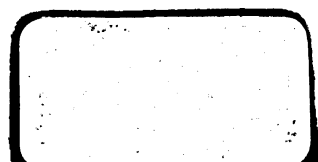
Christian Family Advocate. Magazine.

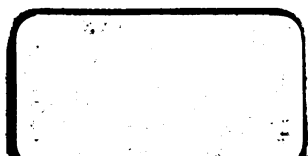
"These revelations teach us what really passes within the walls of Popish convents, and what constitutes the boasted holiness of these dens of superstition, and indolence, and crime."—Nov.

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☞ "What a hateful system is the monasticism of Popery! It tramples under foot the finest, the most amiable feelings of the human heart."—Dec.







1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for transparency and accountability, particularly in financial matters. The text outlines various methods for organizing and storing records, including digital databases and physical filing systems. It also mentions the need for regular audits and reviews to ensure the integrity of the data.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the role of communication in achieving organizational goals. It highlights the importance of clear and concise communication, both internally and externally. The text provides guidelines for effective communication, such as using appropriate language, listening actively, and providing feedback. It also discusses the benefits of open communication and how it can foster a collaborative work environment.

3. The third part of the document addresses the issue of time management. It recognizes that time is a valuable resource and that efficient use of time is crucial for productivity. The text offers several strategies for managing time effectively, including prioritizing tasks, setting deadlines, and delegating responsibilities. It also emphasizes the importance of taking breaks and avoiding procrastination.

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5. The fifth part of the document concludes by summarizing the key points discussed. It reiterates the importance of record-keeping, communication, time management, and continuous learning. The text ends with a call to action, encouraging readers to implement the strategies discussed and to strive for excellence in all their endeavors.



